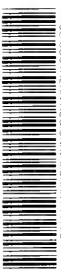


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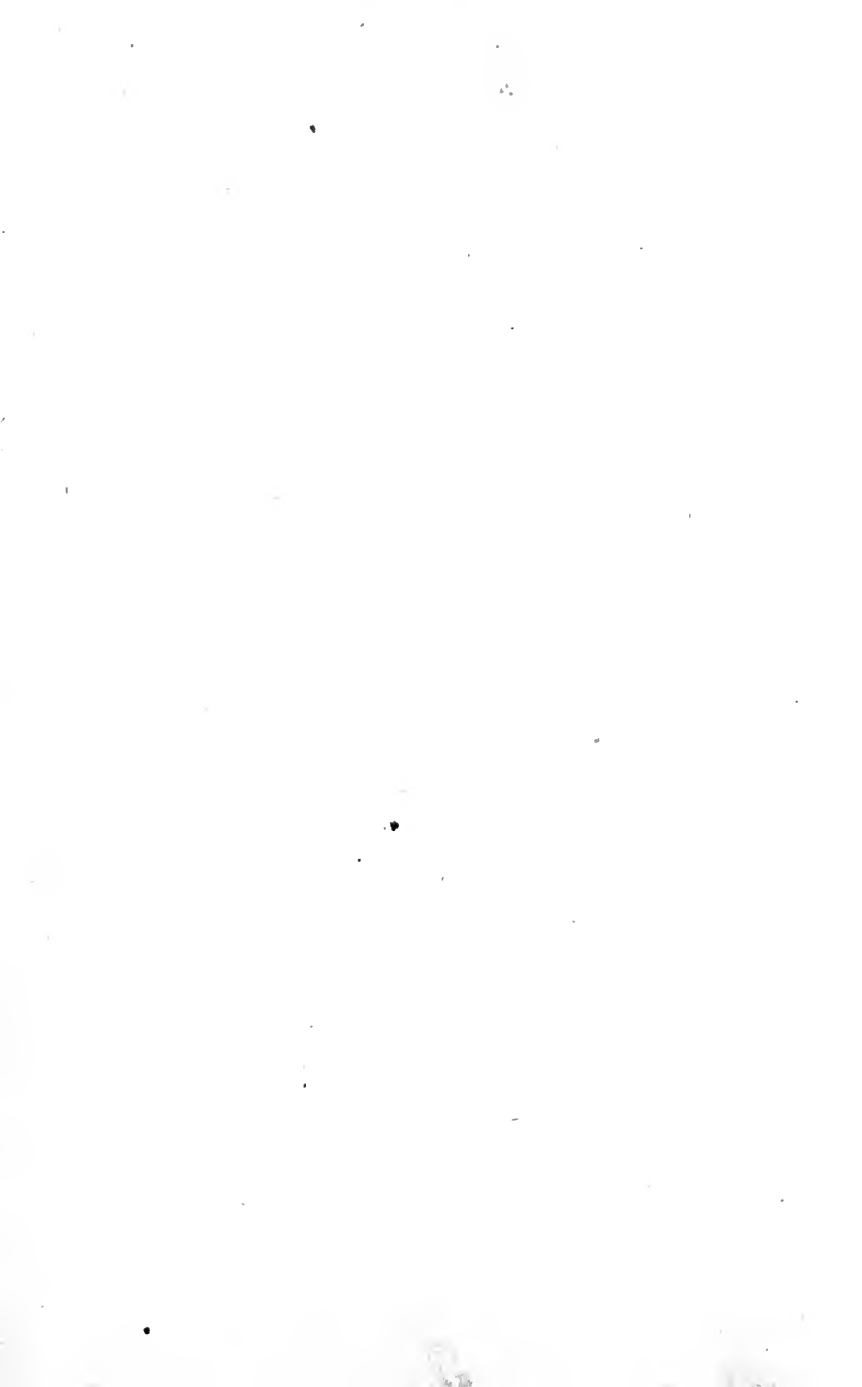
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# FREE LAND AND FREE TRADE

THE LESSONS OF THE ENGLISH CORN  
LAWS APPLIED TO THE  
UNITED STATES.

BY

SAMUEL S. COX.

*For what avail the plough or sail,  
Or land, or life, if freedom fail?—EMERSON.*

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NEW YORK  
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1834

JP

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# FREE LAND AND FREE TRADE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK.

“The request of Industry to the government is as modest as that of Diogenes to Alexander ;—Stand out of my sunshine.” BENTHAM.

INCREASING SURPLUS OF PRODUCTION IN THE UNITED STATES—  
NEED OF FOREIGN MARKETS—PREDOMINANCE OF OUR AGRICULTURAL INTERESTS—FREEDOM FOR LAND AND TRADE DEMANDED—TEACHING OF THE ENGLISH CORN LAWS.

THE thesis of this book is, the necessity of enlarged foreign markets for the surplus of production from farm and factory in the United States.

We are rapidly out-growing the notion that a monopoly of the home market is all we need ; and that it would be as well for us if our borders were surrounded by oceans of fire. The fatness of the land is forcing us to broader views, our amazing natural wealth is compelling us to the alternatives of yielding the policy of selfishness or being choked with our own abundance.

Subordinate to this chief theme—part and parcel of it really—is that of the land and the danger of shackling in any way the wealth-producing forces that lie within it. Slight as has been the attention

thus far given this subject, it is bound to press more and more upon the thoughts of the country. What does the Granger movement signify, what do the investigations into railway discriminations and combinations mean, but that the pressure of chains on the land are beginning to be felt both on the farm and in the busy centres of trade?

Is it not high time to take a new horoscope from the facts presented in these broad fields? The failure of the bread and meat stuffs of the trans-atlantic countries; the providential increase of our own production from the land; the condition of land tenure in Great Britain and Ireland; the unproductive consumption and exhaustion of the products of the soil by the large standing armies of Europe; the progress of this country in almost every line of industrial effort, give vital interest to the discussion proposed.

The forces of production are labor, capital and land. The census of 1880 will show at least 49,000,000 inhabitants in the United States. It will reveal a less rate of decennial increase than in former periods; but much greater than between 1860 and 1870, when it was only 22½ per cent. Immigration is increasing from causes set forth in the volume. We shall not want therefore for the first factor of wealth. As for our capital, we have an assuring indication in the fact that New York has long been the second money centre of the world, and its rivalry with London grows keener year by year. Then as to the land, it is no mere *a priori* guess that while we have an area of territory larger than any European state, except Russia, and a greater number of

people of one tongue than any other nation, our three millions square miles are cultivated as yet only in the proportion of one fourth. But we are enlarging that proportion rapidly. We are moving westward with giant strides, to the rich alluvial soils whence come our wealth.

Our wealth is not in our mines of silver, gold or coal. These may be inexhaustible; yet they are only auxiliaries to our fruitful and boundless acreage. The magnitude and variety of our soils, ranging from the colder to the warmer latitudes, embrace every kind of grain and food; while the garden and orchard are as abundant as our sugar and vine fields. Our energy and skill harness every appliance of mechanical force to plant, gather, and garner the amazing result. And it is no exaggeration to say that the value of the direct product aggregates two thousand five hundred millions of dollars per year.

Compared with our other industries how immense are those which deal with the simple fruits of the soil! Even in regard to cotton, if the statistics of manufacture show anything—as in 1878—they show that we export nearly two thirds of our cotton in the lint, leaving about one third for home manufacture. Of the latter, ninety-six per cent is used at home for clothing our own people.

The native wealth of our soil is inexhaustible, yet we shall be foolish if we therefore suffer our industrial system to “take care of itself”—i. e., be shaped by those who have their own designs to further. Other countries have been richly endowed; yet aristocratic privileges, landlordism, primogenitive

succession and other forms of monopoly have been suffered to fix themselves upon the land, and its richness has been pressed out of it. Is the danger for us a mere vagary? What of the railroad monopoly? Can any one affirm that the land in the United States is free, when so much of the profit in remunerative prices is absorbed by transportation charges? Are not freight combinations and the like only a change in the form—is it not feudality and landlordism still?—the conspiring of class interest against the common weal?

This evil, however, has been held in check to a considerable degree. The source of the injustice, when injustice is done, is so obvious, that the rebellious sufferers at once attack the real oppressor. The people are waking up in all the States, and the railways are on the defensive. But there is another danger which does not approach so openly.

Briefly stated, it is this; that we are rapidly outgrowing the market to which our tariff walls practically limit us. Here is the question:—When our land really shows its splendid opulence, when our acreage is increased both for cattle and grain, is the inevitable surplus over the home and foreign demand to remain with us to glut the market?

I say nothing now of our manufactures. These have risen from \$44 per capita in 1850 to \$111 per capita in 1870, and there can be no doubt that the want of an outlet for the heavy surplus was one of the leading causes of the industrial distress which began in 1873. With scarcely any increase in the



plant, the mills of the country might turn out double and triple their present product.

But it is not necessary to debate this point ; as to the soil there can be no dispute. What is to be the result here of the rapid opening up of the rich farming and grazing lands of the West and Southwest ? Our export of wheat in 1879 figured in value to no less than \$160,000,000 ; corn, \$40,000,000 ; hams and bacon, \$51,000,000 ; lard, nearly \$23,000,000 ; cheese, \$12,000,000 ; butter, \$5,000,000. What will be the end of this amazing development of our native riches ? Will our surplus go to other nations, carrying benefits and bringing benefits in return, or for lack of those mutual conditions which make trade possible, is the flood of good things to be dammed in its passage and flung back upon us to destroy and be destroyed ?

These are questions which vehemently press for answer. Every farmer from the Red River of the North to the Teche is interested in them ; and not less—if he realizes the true relations of his trade—every manufacturer who has not the fortune to possess a monopoly.

We must have the opportunity and privilege,—the liberty,—to trade. We cannot sell, without buying. Our crude product is now nearly ninety per cent of our exports ; but will even that continue ? If England should place restrictions on the importation of our cereals and beef, reenact her corn laws, what would be the effect on us ; and especially in case the good years for crops should return to her and the continent ? Where then would be our market ?

This book proposes to consider these problems in the light of experience. Political economy, both as an inductive and as a deductive science, survives the sneers of the ignorant and the satire of the selfish; but of all the weapons which its armory furnishes, the argument from completed results seems most effective. Writers of other countries, notably France and Germany, have given studies of comparative statistics from the ground of international economy. The author proposes one simple text: the corn laws of England. The history of their enactment, their application and their repeal, is a presentation at once compact and exhaustive of the protective theory in its practical working. There is nothing new to be added to the story. But in the belief that a study of this theme in relation to land and manufactures in the United States may be of genuine service, I submit these pages to an intelligent public.

## CHAPTER II.

### HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE CORN LAWS.

—“Careless of mankind

They lay beside their nectar, and the clouds are curled,  
Round their golden houses girdled by the gleaming world ;  
But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful song,  
Like a tale of little meaning, tho' the words are strong :  
Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil  
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil.”

LOTUS EATERS.

FIVE CENTURIES OF BLUNDERING—FOSTERING INDUSTRY BY RESTRICTING EXPORTS—CLASS LEGISLATION—PATRIOTIC TAXATION—THE BOUNTY NOSTRUM—LOCAL PROTECTION AND ITS FAILURE—THE LOGIC OF STARVATION—REVOLUTION.

LET us begin therefore, at the alphabet. What is corn? To the American it simply means maize, and to the unsophisticated it may be supposed that the corn laws of Great Britain pertain to our Indian corn. But corn is a generic term, signifying the grain or seed of plants, separated from the spike or ear, and used for making bread. There are different species of corn,—wheat, rye, barley, oats and maize. These constitute the chief necessities of life in all countries. The corn laws, therefore, were laws which regulated trade in corn.

The history of the corn laws of England covers nearly five centuries. It will be convenient to study

it in periods ; of which four may be carved out with sufficient definiteness, each marked with its distinct characteristic.

I. 1360-1688. *Restriction of Exports.*

Doubtless the first regulations about corn in Great Britain were well intended. Their purpose was to procure abundance and cheapness. In the earliest eras of that legislation, England was more of an agricultural, than a manufacturing country,—she raised all the corn she consumed and had a surplus. Hence any laws at that time against the importation of corn would have been inoperative. But they were not enacted.

On our federal statute book we have, strange to say, with our millions of surplus, a tariff ostensibly designed to restrict the importation of corn. Of course it is an unsubstantial sop to Cerberus. England was not as foolish as that in her corn legislation. Her policy at this early period was to restrict exportation and thus make the food supply plentiful and cheap. Imagine an American statesman, in our Congress, introducing a law to make bread cheap by forbidding the surplus of California or Minnesota from going abroad ! The world does move.

The first English statute was in the time of the third Edward, in 1360. It forbade exportation. In 1394 exportation was allowed on conditions. In 1436 an act was passed permitting exportation of wheat whenever the price should fall to 6s. 8d. per quarter, and of barley whenever the price should

drop to 3s. 4d. It was not until 1463 that the first glimpse of the protective policy dawned, in a legislative effort to ward off the competition of the continent. Importation was prohibited unless the domestic prices should exceed those named in the law of 1436. In 1562 the price at which exportation could take place was extended. In 1571 duties were imposed on exportation. This act gave some freedom to the trade, although it was limited. These regulations were variously modified at different times, but not essentially altered. In 1670 the export duty was reduced to encourage cultivation, while a heavy duty amounting to prohibition was imposed on imported corn.

Now while we see in all this shifting legislation, under our present lights, a few gleams of good sense,—

“Little gloomy lights, much like a shade,”—

we perceive, through all, that England was sowing the seeds of future misery. She was teaching herself that the natural forces of industry and trade could not be trusted to bring about the best developments; she was forming the habit of meddling and tinkering with the delicate growth of the industrial system; she was accustoming herself—worst of all—to the spectacle of a favored class manipulating the capital and labor of the entire country for its own ends, yet in the name of the country and on pretext of the highest patriotism. Everything was done at the behest and for the aggrandizement of the landed proprietors. Destructive as that legisla-

tion has proved to be to this very landed interest, it is nevertheless true that the self-seeking of the great families was the source of its inspiration.

The lesson of the corn laws, therefore, up to 1688 (in which year England taught so many truths of civil and political freedom), is the lesson which is taught us,—or which would be taught us if we would open our eyes,—by the similar supremacy of a class in this country, and the course of legislation enforced under their domination. The manufacturers of the United States are not a powerful order in point of numbers, yet they have been powerful enough, by their combinations and through the opportunity of the common blindness and indifference, to throttle both commerce and agriculture, and keep the whole people under tribute to their alleged necessities. As with the English landed proprietors, also, their selfish efforts, however successful in putting money into the pockets of a few, have resulted in crippling the industries they were designed to make strong.

## II. 1688—1773. *Fostering by Bounties.*

The next era may be called the bounty era—running from 1688 to 1773. The plan of protecting the favored interest by direct payment from the public treasury was the feature of the legislation of this period. Before detailing it, however, it will be worth while to notice the course of a subsidiary movement, which at once illustrates the selfishness and the short-sightedness of class government. The country gentry, herding around such ministers as Walpole, and themselves the lords of their several groups of “corn

fed yeomanry," were never, perhaps, more grasping than then. One of their efforts to enrich themselves, was an internal protective system, based on the notion that if the consumer could be forced to buy directly from the grower, the profits of the middlemen would fall to the land. It was made a penal offense to buy corn in one market to dispose of it in another. The system was like that of the *octroi* duties prevailing in certain countries of Europe; where every locality had its tax,—against the income of the surrounding, and the outgo of the local product. The regulations worked only ill, of course. The crowding out of middle men by some better method of discharging their functions is one thing; the attempt to annihilate them by law is quite another.

I have seen a law passed in Congress, to prevent traffic in gold. It was offered by Mr. Thaddeus Stevens, the first year of the war; but it was repealed, even before it was printed, in a few days after its enactment.

We need not be too critical upon the men of that early English period. It is strange, indeed, that the agriculturist could not at once see how insignificant were the profits to be screwed out of the local consumers, compared with the freely given remuneration of a greater market. But is the blindness which exists to-day less strange?

The *octroi* system was only broken by the logic of events. The truth became more and more apparent under actual experience figured in pounds, shillings and pence, until, in 1773, every vestige of internal restriction was effaced from the English

statute book. In other words, the protective system failed; free trade was established within the circuit of the country's borders.


We pass now to the bounty element which distinguished this period. The era was a revolutionary one. William III had ascended the throne through the powerful interests of the agriculturists. The land owners were prompt to get their advantages. They procured the bounty act of 1689;—which provided that wherever wheat should be at or below forty-eight shillings, there should be a bounty of five shillings allowed on its exportation. What was the effect of this bounty on exportation? It led to extensive cultivation, and hence lowered the price. Wheat sold lower seventy years after the bounty than it had seventy years before. Exportation largely increased—and the tax-payers made good the loss! This is the protectionist plan of prosperity. In ten years, 1740 to 1750, the bounties amounted to \$7,500,000. Of course this came from the people. It could come from no other source.

In most of our tariff discussions in Congress, during and since the war, those of us who took part in the debates, fixed this one fact, *eo nomine*, as to bounty, indelibly upon the record. It was the price which the people paid for the lush growth of unremunerative labor. In our case, agriculture paid the most of it, to the "splendid paupers" who grasped it in their enormous duties on manufactured articles.

The simplest query which can be asked of the protectionist is: Why should one man in one trade



have a bounty given to him for his encouragement, and not another man in another occupation? Why should that other be compelled to pay that bounty to his neighbor, when his neighbor pays no bounty to him? And if his neighbor does pay an equal bounty to him, where is the benefit? The hatter gives a dollar a year to the shoemaker to foster the shoe trade, and the shoemaker responds with a dollar a year to the hatter to foster the hat trade. Where is the gain, where is the sense? Is it not obvious that a tax to be protective must be unjust; it must take from one class to give to another without return. That is what protection means; and that is what bounties signify.



After 1769, the agriculturist was still waxing greater and greater in English politics, but the manufacturing and commercial interests were extending also. The peace of 1763 with France had increased the English colonial possessions. New avenues of wealth began to open on every side. Commerce begat capital; capital was invested in manufactures; and population increased in an unprecedented way. The nation received a tremendous impulse of prosperity. How was corn affected in trade and legislation by this new era of prosperity? Consumption increased enormously, and prices rose in corresponding measure. Importation of grain was prohibited. The corn monopoly was complete, and the door of opportunity opened the way to unbounded wealth.—Did it? The monopolists surely thought so, and the wheat price-list seemed indisputable evidence. But they deceived themselves,—

even as the protectionists of this enlightened age deceive themselves. The price list is an elastic measure. The swollen figures on it may be coincident with poverty. The land owners were not as well off as they thought they were,—and they were preparing for themselves bitter revenges.

### III. 1773–1815. *Protection and Starvation.*

The next era is from 1773 to 1815. At the beginning of this era the tide had turned somewhat in the direction of less restricted trade.

In 1773 the city of London offered a bounty of four shillings for twenty thousand quarters on importation—a local but very significant effort to counteract, for the benefit of the people, the influence of the monopolists.

In 1774 a more generous national policy was adopted. The duty on importation was fixed at six shillings for wheat above forty-eight shillings, and when the price exceeded forty-four shillings, exportation was forbidden and bounties withdrawn. The design of this complicated law was to prevent such great fluctuations as had taken place. It succeeded. Corn became practically free, from 1773 to 1790, and prices were steady to an unprecedented degree. Agriculture was not injured. On the contrary, five hundred thousand acres of waste lands were redeemed during this period.

Still agriculturists were dissatisfied, and unhappily for themselves and the country, they were the ruling interest in legislative councils. Their sup-

port was necessary not only to Lord North's American policy, but to all his other policies.

They began to meddle with the sliding scale tariff for their own advantage, promising meanwhile prosperity to the whole nation. The corn laws were subjected to a variety of manipulations, each alteration marked with the feature of a rise in the protective price. The effort to outwit the natural laws of trade failed, as it must always fail. Food became dear, but dear food did not bring high wages. The economic forces worked on resistlessly despite the suave promises of the protectionists. Riots were common in the agricultural districts. The laboring masses were ground harder and harder.

The war with France, the derangement of the currency, Napoleon's commercial code, natural scarcity, and other causes, had combined to keep up the high price of food; but when all this was changed, when food might have been plentiful before hungry mouths, the monopolists only fought the more for their baneful privileges.

A flood of corn in 1813 was the signal for a most bitter contest between the producing or landed interest, and the consumer of grain. As a politico-economic battle it was unexampled for its fierceness. It had almost the vivacity of melo-drama, and, in many of its scenes, the agony of tragedy. The toilers paraded their gaunt, famine-wasted skeletons—among them even the laborers and tenantry from the very farms whence came the rich livings of the landlords—calling upon all to witness what the greed of the wealthy was doing for them. The strife seemed

vain. Wages declined; rents advanced. The rich grew richer, the poor grew poorer. Yet the revolution was coming on irresistibly.

#### IV. 1815-1846. *Revolution.*

The last period may be taken from 1815 to 1846, when the corn laws were abolished. This period began in desperation; but it ended in the brightest hope! It was a night, but a night thick with stars, and it ended with the morning!

The success obtained by the opponents of protection was at first limited and temporary. In 1815 the landed interest was still dominant in Parliament. Under great excitement, that body dared to permit freedom from duty to warehoused corn, while it forbade importation for consumption, except upon a fixed average price. The hungry population were roused to fury. Parliament was menaced. Its halls had to be protected by a military force.

This law marked the culmination of the protective corn legislation. From this time, each succeeding step was an approach toward genuine principles of economy.

✓ | But the protectionists did not know that they had overstepped the limit of toleration. The usual jargon was still talked to pacify the outraged people. The new law would keep up prices, and thus enable the farmer to pay good rents and high wages. The same tale that is told to-day! Make the necessities of life scarce and dear, and the working people will somehow be entirely happy.

The law did not keep up prices. The fluctua-

tions ran violently through a scale covering two hundred per cent. Renewed distress was the consequence, and the experiments made to relieve it in 1822, 1825 and 1826 proved all unavailing.

Starvation has a cold, sharp logic, which cuts like steel.

It began to be questioned whether all kinds of legislation upon bread taxing were not fruitful of misery. Men gathered at ale houses, corners, and in factories, and wondered why they had been so long blind.

The pressure of public opinion was seen in a multitude of legislative make-shifts, acts and orders. The clamor of the people rose louder and louder. They felt,—they saw that their very lives were at stake.

To save them, there appeared in the lists no feudal knight surrounded by gorgeous pageantry; only the genius of Scotch economy, directed by the benevolence of pure reason!

The end began with a new sliding scale system—championed by Canning and Grant. The aristocracy prophesied the ruin of the country. They were ignored. The great Duke of Wellington threw his sword into the scale. In vain!

A new class of men now come upon the English forum. They penetrate St. Stephens. They agitate on the hustings. They move parliament. They are led in song by Ebenezer Elliott, in oratory by Cobden and Bright, and in legislative warfare by Mr. Villiers of Wolverhampton,—the most princely of all the princely knights who broke lances with landlordism for repeal!

## CHAPTER III.

### THE HEROIC METHOD AND THE HEROES.

"I shall leave a name execrated by every monopolist who, from less honorable motives, clamors for protection because it conduces to his own individual benefit; but it may be that I shall leave a name sometimes remembered with expressions of good-will in the abodes of those whose lot it is to labor, and to earn their daily bread by the sweat of their brow, when they shall recruit their exhausted strength with abundant and untaxed food, the sweeter because it is no longer leavened by the sense of injustice."

SIR ROBERT PEEL.

THE MEN WHO FOUGHT THE FIGHT—SIR ROBERT PEEL—CHARLES VILLIERS—RICHARD COBDEN—JOHN BRIGHT—DANIEL O'CONNELL—EBENEZER ELLIOTT.

THE men who fought the fight for the repeal of the corn laws make up a singularly notable company.

There is a long roll of these worthies, and some of them are not Englishmen. The anti-slavery men here, as well as the free-traders on the continent sympathized with the movement. Cobbett was not less enthusiastic than Archibald Prentice,—the League's historian. W. J. Fox, Hume, Dr. Bowring, Sir Thomas Potter, Earl Ducie and Brown of Liverpool,—but why make the catalogue? Is it not enough to say that Cobden was its chief orator and

that Carlyle was one of its heroes? A few peaks stand out,—“in mien and gesture proudly eminent.”

Sir Robert Peel, the potential head of the government, with one courageous stroke, ending with the splendid sentiment at the head of this chapter, carried free trade. He destroyed himself politically—and made his name forever great on the scroll of the world's benefactors. His action in the crisis was a fitting crown to his noble career. A man as reserved as he was profound, he had reasoned his way through traditional bondage to an enlarged belief, but he had not impressed the fact of his change of opinion upon his conservative constituency. Nor had the circumstances called for any declaration. But suddenly, the stress of events forced upon him the alternatives of sacrificing his convictions or abandoning a famine-stricken land; of playing with the truth and mocking at suffering, or alienating the constituency that honored him and laying himself open to the charge of political treason. He rose a hero to the test. He stood for right and humanity; he became a “traitor” and is forever blessed.

Mr. Charles Villiers worthily stands by the great prime minister. It was his persistent urgency, session after session, that renewed the contest until its consummation in triumph. I saw him in England in 1851, fresh, gallant, industrious and persistent. He has died recently, and the constituency which he represented so long and so ably have honored themselves and him by erecting a monument to his memory in Wolverhampton. To him, more than to Cobden or to Bright, or even to Sir Robert Peel, is due

✓ | the long, patient, successful warfare, which led to the repeal of the corn laws. He was a member of the aristocratic class. In his advocacy of the liberalities and humanities of free commerce, he ran counter to his order and braved the stigma which attached to him for his revolutionary principles. Bringing in bill after bill while others were lethargic or weary, he never suffered the Commons to rest until the great end was accomplished. It was his motion, on the Monday night in February, 1846, for immediate repeal, that gave the last blow to the greatest wrong in English history.

Richard Cobden, it need not be said, was the leader among the people. He was of the people; the son of a yeoman and brought up to trade. His thorough business training and his wide knowledge of business needs, acquired in travelling, while partner in a Manchester cotton mill, naturally made him a dangerous opponent in debate on such a theme. His style was simple, earnest and crystalline. He was not ostentatious; yet none the less powerful. The tide was not more irresistible.


John Bright survives, in all his early vigor. He was at this period in the first flush of his splendid powers. His commanding presence, resonant voice, Saxon speech, and virile logic brought a strength to the cause whose value it is not easy to estimate. Nor was it any injury to the influence and future prospects of the coming leader that, while his father was a Quaker manufacturer of carpets, he was made independent of political gains by his wealth. What a splendid career he began with this Liberty of Trade,



which he is now illustrating with the Liberty of Land!

Nor ought it to be forgotten that such men as Daniel O'Connell contributed their aid to the great result. Speaking in 1840, at Manchester, O'Connell boldly stated the question thus:—

“If the corn laws are good to rescue the people from wretchedness, why do they not rescue the people of Ireland? Are there not sixty or seventy thousand Irish in Manchester, driven there by destitution in their own country? If the corn laws give employment and high wages, why do they not give them in agricultural Ireland?” Subsequently he asked what the corn laws were for? “To put money into the pockets of the landlords—not the money of the Russians, the Danes or the Swedes, but that of their fellow-countrymen.”



When such a heroic statesman could forget all other antagonisms to join with those I have named, need we marvel that the victory, begun in 1832, was achieved at last against such tremendous forces?

It ought not to be forgotten that the hymns and rhymes of the blacksmith poet, Ebenezer Elliott, had their marked and popular effect. His muse, smutched though it was by his smithy, had all the ruggedness of the blows on the anvil.

He regarded his poems as weeds; but, as he said, they sprang out of existing things. His indignation at wrong could not be restrained. He did not pretend to argue. He denounced with vigorous prose and stalwart style. Yet, as his verses show, he had

a tender heart for flowers and children, and a boundless love of nature ; but the sight of his class suffering from cruel extremes, because of such God and man offending laws awakened all the powers of his mind and genius.

No one, however honored or titled, if in favor of class distinctions, and chronic wrongs, is exempt from the fury of his ireful pen. Wellington, is not to him, the Great Duke ; he is, because a Bread Taxer, by a witless paraphrase, called Blucherloo. The aristocracy of the land have no respect from the poet,—because they are palaced almoners, living off of Bread taxes. With no end of dogmatic iteration, he personifies this class, as “ Sir Bread Tax Pauper, and Lady Betty Pension.” They are, in the nomenclature of his invective, slaves and robbers—despicable creatures,—Landlord Devils, who tax the British cake and mix the bread with bran, and lacking bran, with tears.

I have said that he had a tender heart under his brawn. Some of his poems were in an ambitious vein, and give glimpses of that fairy light that never was on sea or land—the consecration and the poets dream ; but even when he sings of dew-glistening Albion, with its woods and dropping caves, its linnet, red breast, lark and wren,—there appears the gaunt skeleton of “ blasted homes and much enduring men.” Then taste and propriety give way before his truculent and oracular utterances. Passion lifts the arm of strength, and the anvil chorus drowns the spirit ditties of his gentler Muse. You then feel the enormous power with which he hates those who made

bread dear, and labor cheap, and recognize him as a factor in the struggle for Repeal.

I would not, out of mere romantic sentiment toward this poet of iron,—this laureate of a fiscal revolution—overate the influence of his character, or derogate from the influence of others, less stalwart and stern. He must have been a man of rare cleverness, since he was the friend of Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer—who though a tory Statesman was an admirer of this poet of Nature; and at the same time, a friend of Jeremy Bentham,—whom he calls “our second Locke,” and to whom he dedicated his Corn Law Rhymes.

Nor is it just to aggrandize too much the labor of Sir Robert Peel, so as to detract from others who labored in this League of Love. Sir Robert was not the only hero of this bloodless revolution.

The proposition of Sir Robert Peel in 1842,—a compromising measure—was as vehemently attacked upon the hustings by Mr. Cobden and his indefatigable league of eloquent orators, as it was denounced by Mr. Villiers and his coadjutors in Parliament. From that time forward the shibboleth was *total abolition*. The proposition of Peel, in 1842, and its impolicy was discussed, and its injustice stigmatized in every form, in hymns and songs, as well as in the forum and press; and by every mode of inspiring and enlightening public opinion.

The law was assailed for its intrinsic badness. No compromise was to be discussed. The indescribable distress of the operatives and laborers of England appealed to the humanities of man's nature.

The fearful statistics of crime and poverty were collected and fired with burning eloquence. Other poetry than that of Ebenezer Elliott bewailed the misery and woe of the poor,—as the fell consequence of these laws. Every imaginable device was called into requisition to move the public mind to demand, at once and forever, the abolition of restrictions upon the prime necessary of life. The agitation threatened the fabric of society. But the year 1842 was as May sunshine to the hurricane of 1846.

Sir Robert Peel had been the staunch friend of protection hitherto, and always, but he was not vain enough to be consistent when such excesses appeared. How courageously he yielded to the demands of that public opinion, which had been created through so many throes! Is not this the proudest part of his biography? “The time is ripe and rotten ripe for change,”—he exclaimed, and amid the jeers of his own friends, he gave to England the cheap loaf, which is the sweetest immortelle to his memory.

Comparative quiet followed the victory. A fear that the future would prove less favorable to the consummation of that progressive policy which had so long been advancing toward free trade, crept quietly over England. Men sat in trembling lest their prophecies might fail, and all the resources of their statesmanship and sagacity be dissipated. We now know what gigantic consequences have followed. It is for us to apply the lessons to our own land.

## CHAPTER IV.

### ORGANIC PRINCIPLES OF THE CORN LAWS.

“ Of seeds and plants, and what will thrive and rise,  
And what the genius of the soil denics,  
This ground with Bacchus, that with Ceres, suits ;  
That other loads the trees with happy fruits ;  
A fourth, with grass unbidden, decks the ground.  
Thus Tmolus is with yellow saffron crown'd ;  
India black ebon and white iv'ry bears,  
And soft Idume weeps her od'rous tears.  
Thus Pontus sends her beaver-stones from far ;  
And naked Spaniards temper steel for war ;  
Epirus, for the Elean Chariot breeds.  
(In hopes of palms) a race of running steeds.  
This is the original contract ; these the laws  
Impos'd by Nature, and by Nature's cause.

*Virgil Georgics Lib. I. 54-61.*

THE LOGIC OF RESTRICTION ON EXPORT—ALTERNATE ABUNDANCE  
AND SCARCITY—HIGH PROFITS AND RUINOUS LOSSES—BOUN-  
TIES AND WHO PAY THEM—DIVERSION FROM PROFITABLE TO  
UNPROFITABLE INDUSTRY—NATURE'S PROVISION AGAINST  
FLUCTUATIONS.

THE principles of the corn laws, so far as they  
affected foreign trade, had reference to export-  
ation and importation.

The laws regarding exportation were of two  
kinds ; those which prohibited exportation, and  
those which encouraged exportation by bounty.

#### *The Prohibitory Policy.*

The plausible notion that the way to make an

abundance is to keep at home all home production, was the ground of the policy of prohibiting exportation. What is the fallacy of this? For a season it may answer to prohibit exportation, and thus produce plenty; but for a steady and bountiful supply, the merchant must have the liberty to export his surplus. If he is not allowed this privilege in abundant years, what will be the effect? The market will be glutted, and the growers will be injured. On the following year, less land or less of a peculiar crop will be cultivated; scarcity and high prices will follow. If, on that following year, when little is harvested, that little should fail, starvation is the consequence. Ruinous fluctuations, therefore, are the consequences of legislative intermeddling with exportation.

The effects of this system, as we have seen, were such as to work its own abrogation.

### *The Bounty Juggle.*

As to the bounty policy: Its object was to create an extension of the market. But did this encourage or affect agriculture? How does it extend the market? What kind of extension is that which pays a bonus in order to create an artificial demand? The consumer will give for corn just what it is worth. The bounty comes from the government. Whence does the government obtain the bounty? From the people. Then the people pay for the encouragement they desire? Whence came the immense amounts that were paid from 1768 to 1773 on account of bounties? From the tax-payers. Who

are they? Why, most of them were the corn growers themselves. The agriculturists paid for their own protection.

Make the application to this country, and the result is even more ludicrous. To suppose that a nation can increase its capital and production by bounties, is to suppose that a man may get rich by changing his money from one pocket to the other.

Bounties temporarily raised the price of corn. They gave a fictitious stimulus to agriculture, and brought under cultivation a great quantity of bare land, such as bogs and fens,—which required a great deal more labor for the production of the same quantity of corn, than the good land. Now the average price of corn, like that of any other commodity, is regulated by the quantity, more or less, of labor, necessary for its production. Hence, if a people invest their capital and employ their labor in producing upon bad land, when they might employ that labor and capital in departments of industry which would produce at a higher rate, that people are wasting their resources by just the difference between the cost of the two separate products.

Until England set the example of protection, most countries favored importation; at least, they did not discourage it.

That England should have led in the self-destructive movement seems most strange; that the fulcrum she chose was corn could hardly be believed now, were it not written down in indelible history. Do not the great body of the English people depend for their daily bread on other than agricultural in-

dustry? They manufacture for the world. The statistics of one week's work in Manchester, with its tons and tons of production, confound the marvels of magic. What more obvious than that England's road to prosperity was in developing her extraordinary manufactures, and buying from abroad the cheap food with which to sustain the armies of her mills and furnaces? She learned the lesson in 1846, and is not likely to forget it.

*Nature's Provision against Scarcity.*

But without reference to the peculiar talents or resources of any community, how unwise is the policy of rejecting the good things which other communities would send to us? It may be asserted as a general principle that the wider in extent the surface of a country, the less it is exposed to fluctuations and scarcity in the supply, especially of the life necessities. Nature, in her entirety, is not fluctuating and uncertain. To the observing and thoughtful, she is uniform in this raising of grain. This is a promise made by Jehovah after the Deluge:—"while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest shall not cease." A general failure of crops may occur in a small area like Great Britain; but in a country as large as Russia or the United States it seldom or never occurs. So it has been remarked that in the United States, when large crops are not harvested east of the Mississippi, the farther West teems with lavish abundance. If the South withholds, the North gives back. When applied to the



whole world the principle is absolute. History has no example of universal scarcity. The reason is obvious. The weather that is unfavorable to vegetation in one species of soil, is frequently advantageous to it in another. If moist soil follow from a wet summer, dry rocky districts make luxuriant crops. One country like one district is peculiarly fitted for the growth of maize, like our Mississippi Valley; another for the grape, like France or California; a third abounds in minerals like Australia or Nevada; a fourth has inexhaustible forests, like British Columbia, or Wisconsin. Virgil has beautifully described this harmonious and varied dispensation of nature in the significant lines at the head of this chapter. His *ætterna fœdera* was not a corn-law league, nor a zoll-verein. The eternal laws and covenants to which the poet refers, were laid by nature on certain places, ever since the flood; *Imposuit natura locis*. Out of this deference to natural federation, the poet says that a laborious race of men was produced. Thus Rome grew great. Modern progress, by telegraph and steam, has given miraculous meaning to these lines. They are an illustration, for all time, of the liberty of land and trade; and an incentive to the utility and dignity of the labor and manhood which they magnify and exalt.

Suppose, therefore, that there are no restrictions. Then the law obtains, that the wider the extent of surface, the less danger is there of scarcity,—and the greater is the supply of the necessities and conveniencies of life.

Why should England with her inestimable and

peculiar advantages, have been restricted in the supply of corn to her own soil? Why should there have been embarrassment, scarcity, or starvation there? Had she not in superfluity the advantages for producing what other countries wanted, and did not other countries teem with what she wanted? Why should she, or any other country, counteract, by restriction or prohibition, the manifest benevolence of Providence, whereby the excess of one land compensates for the deficiency of another?

## CHAPTER V.

### INDEPENDENCE AND INTER-DEPENDENCE.

“ Heaven formed each on other to depend  
Bids each on other for assistance call,  
Till one man's weakness grows the strength of all,  
Wants, frailties, passions, closer still ally  
The common interest or endear the tie.”

POPE.

WAR AND HOME SUPPLIES—INDEPENDENCE A VAGARY — FOREIGN  
EXPERIENCE AND THE COAST LINE OF THE UNITED STATES—  
INDEPENDENCE AND UNFRUITFUL LABOR — RESULTS OF FREE  
TRADE IN ENGLAND—COMPARISON WITH AMERICAN SYSTEM.

IT was said that the corn laws rendered the country independent of foreign supplies.

Now in the first place, why was it necessary to render the country independent of foreign supplies? Is this only an ebullition of patriotism? Is it a sage argument in economy? Economy has reference to cost. It has no elements kindred to patriotism. The fallacy deserves consideration, not so much from its force, as because its refutation enables one to make plain the principles of unrestricted interchange.

This argument is most strenuously urged in connection with the contingency of foreign war:—“ Suppose we are dependent upon another country for our supplies. We fall into a war with that country. Where are we then?—And does not common sense

enjoin us to be prepared always to provide for our wants from our own soil? ”

The answer is an entirely practical one. The accusation of “mere theory” cannot be brought against it. It has received again and again the demonstration of historical events.

Even in a time of war, it is as much for the interest of the foreigner to sell to the enemy, as for the enemy to buy. Holland was fed by foreign grain through peace and through war, and her supplies were always abundant and her prices steady. When the continental system of Napoleon was at its height, when it was screwed up to the snapping limit,—when the magnificent arbiter disposed of his own brother, because that brother did not act up to his principles—England imported 1,600,000 quarters of corn, with 800,000 of this from France, and the rest from countries then provinces of France. This was during England’s war with France,—with the most implacable and powerful enemy that ever challenged her arms. Napoleon, with all his codes and powers, was impotent to choke the natural channel of products to the best market—and is it probable that in the future, a greater than a Napoleon will arise? Is it likely that any war can so blockade the vast coast line of the United States, as to shut off the supplies we may wish to purchase from those who will certainly wish to sell?

When it comes to the necessities by which millions live, no engines of war and no codes as to contraband can stop their influx. God never made an independent nation, any more than an independ

ent man. England cannot be independent of foreign supply ;—nor can America, until we forget our habits, and learn to raise tea, coffee, sugar and cocoa nuts. Change the zones, and we may be independent in these things. We can never be independent, how much so ever we may manufacture or raise. Does not England import her raw cotton, and other materials, which employ millions of her population? Upon their supply hangs the existence of a large part of her people. Did the raising of cotton in Egypt, India and in Central America, during our civil war, make her independent of the United States for that staple? If it be independence to raise corn at a greater expense than it can be raised abroad, why may not England raise cotton also? Why import tea, sugar, coffee and timber? Why not be absolutely independent—and at the same time open up to the people infinite fields of labor? Why not, indeed? Abundant labor is what we all wish, is it not? The protectionist assures us that this is the fact, and do we not endorse his words? We want unlimited work. We pray for labor. Why should the economist say to us that we are mistaken—that we want,—not abundant toil, but abundant products? Do we not know our own minds? And have we not set them down in the black and white of our tariff laws? Give us independence and our fill of strain and sweat !

The English reformers did not thus reason, however. They were anxious that the fruitfulness of labor should be increased, not that the toil itself should be made greater and harder. Have their ex-

pectations been realized? Let the unimpassioned voice of the statistician reply.

England has met with reverses since the corn-law repeal. That is true. Her misfortunes in trade, manufacture, agriculture and finance have been many and severe. Yet with all, the fortunes of the masses of her people from 1846 to the present, afford an illustration of the benefits of the repeal and of the policy of international dependence and reciprocity which the veriest caviller will hesitate to attack.

Giving the corn laws only three years to make their effects felt, an analysis of the general trade statistics of Great Britain yields such significant results as these :—

During the twenty years preceding 1849, the exports of British and Irish productions had increased  $33\frac{1}{2}$  per cent for each decade. From 1849 to 1859, the increase was 105 per cent ! It is fair to presume that by 1859 English industry had become adjusted to the new conditions. Nevertheless, for the period up to the Franco-Prussian war, there was an increase of exports of 45 per cent.

The value of the exports *per capita* in 1849, was \$10.93 ; in 1859, it had more than doubled, being \$22.11. In 1869, it had risen to \$29.79.

In 1878, while we Americans were making great boast of our exports, their value *per capita* was only \$12.

The expansion of the tonnage of the British mercantile marine is not pleasant reading for Americans ; but it belongs to the story. The figures in 1840 were, 2,720,000 tons. In 1860—while yet

the war which "gave the carrying trade of the United States to the greedy British" was but a threat—the total was no less than 4,586,000 tons. Ten years more of free trade made it 5,617,000 tons. And in 1878, the sum was a magnificent 6,198,000.

During these forty years, the protecting navigation laws of the United States fostered her foreign carrying trade into the grave; while her unparalleled opportunity for coast-wise efforts brought her tonnage laboriously up from 2,180,000 to 4,212,000 tons.

Nor have the working people of England been routed out of the mills by foreign pauper labor. In cotton manufacture, the number of hands employed increased from 330,924 in 1850, to 479,519 in 1874.

The woolen trade for the same period nearly doubled its force. So also the flax industry.

Among manufactures of more recent growth, jute reported 5,967 operatives in 1861, and 37,920 in 1874. And the tale might be continued indefinitely.

If the industrial troubles of Great Britain were as severe as they are commonly portrayed, nothing is more certain than that striking results would appear in the statistics of the savings banks, the charities and the police courts. Striking results do, indeed, appear, but not on the side which some would expect. Between the years 1871 and 1877, the amounts deposited in the savings banks have increased by steady additions, from £55,843,667 to £72,979,443; the number of paupers relieved in England and Wales has steadily decreased from 1,081,925 to 742,703; the convictions for criminal

offences in the United Kingdom have declined from 16,387, with a population of  $31\frac{1}{2}$  millions to 16,255, with a population of 33 millions.

The sophism as to national independence loses somewhat of its cunning in the light of facts like these. The truth is coming more and more into the light.

Nation must lean upon nation. The dispensations of Providence which have varied the growth of every clime, and the staple of every soil, make it as much the duty of men to exclude monopoly from the family of nations, as selfishness from the family of individuals. They make patriotism and philanthropy work hand and hand, and peace and plenty to kiss each other.

The doctrine of national independence by virtue of a contravention of nature's order sounds strangely enough when translated into plain speech:—"You, who are fit to be a manufacturer for the world, must turn plowman, and you, plowman, must turn, against your will, into a manufacturer. Artisans of England, starve!—that the rich lands may be worked at unprofitable outlay and the barren lands yield an immediate crop to their insatiate owner! You, agriculturist in America!—with your free homestead, and cheap acres, outvying in fatness the fabled vales of the classics,—instead of supplying the English artisan with food, must turn a manufacturer of dear fabrics, for a home market or your own use!" By the same logic, dispense with the sun and soil of Florida, and raise oranges in New Hampshire; grow lemons in the conservatories of Fifth Avenue; plow up the



granite bed about Central Park and sow it in oats and wheat ; make all other silly arrangements you will—until experience teaches the sublimity of such foolery, and until your patriotism is tried in the crucible of disaster.



It seems useless to argue such points. The incompatibility between national prosperity and national independence, so-called, is manifest. Even if the theory seems true, practice will not conform to it.

What was the result of the exclusive policy in England? How did it affect her relations with the world? Did it make the nation more independent? If it did, it was in this wise :—The countries under the German league had some twenty millions engaged in agriculture. England, before the repeal of the corn laws, had about thirty thousand owners of the soil. It was for these thirty thousand that she would shut out the millions of Germany, and the custom that these millions would bring to her manufacturers.

This was independence ! From 1832 to 1837, the quantity of English goods exported to Germany actually diminished one-half.

England knows better now. She has grown rich by making hers a market for all the world.

To use the language of a French minister, "To get concessions from others, we ought to be in the condition to grant them,"—a policy, which France, now, with a prohibition of nearly all the articles of our production, might well heed. Especially should she heed it, when she complains that our silks are

taking the place of hers, and our wines sapping the product of her vineyards.

To be in a reciprocal condition with other nations is to be utterly independent ; for independence in economy is to be dependent on *all*, thus making *all* dependent on us.

But what, after all, is this independence which we are told is so precious ? Is it not the independence of poverty ? Consider the wealth that lies in that man's hands who possesses an abounding surplus of the products of the soil, and is left unrestrained in the disposition of his riches. Comfort, refinement, elevation—these are within his grasp.

No man in the higher walks of civilization can be satisfied with the products confined within his patriotic soil. Is he an elegant man ? The roses of Cashmere give much of their attar for his boudoir.—Is he a neat man ? His very neckerchief ties him to the memory of Jacquard and his loom. By the thin film of the cocoon, he is bound to the little spinner who builds his silken sarcophagus upon the mulberries of Italy.—Is he a gay man ? The jewels on his breast are picked up afar in Golconda, and polished in Amsterdam—Is he a *bon-vivant* ? The sherries of Xerrez are fabricated and flavored for the satisfaction of his palate.—Would he be a witty man ? Does he not know that the camel passing amid the ruins of Baalbec and Palmyra, or the donkey trudging through the sands of the desert, are bearing the fragrant spice, to stimulate his appetite while he seasons his eloquence ?—Is he a fluent man ? Let him lubricate his *chordae vocales* with the candied fruits and “dul-

cet syrups, tinct with cinnamon from silken Samarcand or cedared Lebanon."—Is he a smoking man? Does not the fragrant weed grow in Cuba and Manilla, for his special delectation?—Is he a family man? Arabia, Java, and Brazil give him coffee; China, tea; and Cuba, sugar.—Is he a gentleman? He has his broadcloth from France and his wife her silk and satin from Lyons.—Is he a working man? Do not his tools come from the inventive and mechanical skill of all lands, and his shelter, food and clothing out of the liberty of land and trade?—Is he a Christian man? Does he not know that but for these interchanges,—our cheap coal, steam and ships,—the missionary would be limited to one language and one country, and the gospel never have had a chance to fill the earth with its glory?

## CHAPTER VI.

### SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE CORN LAWS.

The Corn Laws keep all the air hot : fostered by their fever warmth, much that is evil . . . is rapidly coming to life among us.

THOMAS CARLYLE.

IMPOVERISHMENT OF THE WAGE CLASS—INCREASE OF PAUPERISM  
AND CRIME—PHYSICAL DETERIORATION—CORRUPTION OF PUBLIC  
MORALS—DISINTEGRATION OF THE STATE.

THE corn law policy doubtless bore with the heaviest weight upon the English laborer. It detracted from his adequate reward ; it took away his greatest stimulus to work ; it restricted supply, and lessened abundance. It was as indefensible in principle, as it was injurious in operation.

#### *Protection and Want.*

That labor was not adequately rewarded will appear, when we consider the immense resources of England ; her civil institutions, her knowledge, her inventive genius, her morality and religion. Such a country ought to be happy. But was she happy? Why did the prayer of millions go up to Heaven, in vain, for so many long years, for daily bread? Why did four millions live on oat meal, and six millions on potatoes ; and thus ten millions lose the luxury of wheaten flour, while a virgin continent like our own was ready to supply them, under mutual

offices? Why were the poor houses crowded? Why in the name of that God, whose providence was counteracted so long, should England be starved, or even poor? The poor rates in the city of London in 1842, amounted to nearly £30,000,000 sterling. How often, in those days of sadness, the torch of the mob lit up the lurid sky? Why did Chartism arise, in its rude strength? Why did all the complicated ills which attend famine, fall upon England? Why was she, at every change in the heavens which menaced her crops, threatened with misery and woe? Was it because English industry was unproductive, that it received so little? Was not her industry and skill developed? Did not the gigantic forces of steam, modified and harnessed in a thousand ways, nerve and assist the arm of labor? Did not the contrivances of her genius quadruple the facilities of transportation, and render the supply of human want easy and cheap? Yet it was *that* England that suffered. Let us keep in mind the parallelism of our own country, especially during the riots of 1877, and answer these singular questions with thoughtful consideration.

The wages of the laborer are not raised with the price of food. His real wages are rather lowered: they lose in purchasing power. They tend to decline in nominal amount also; for the workman is in a poor condition to bargain with his master for wages when food is dear and work scarce. Of course there were other causes than restriction on foreign grain, to withdraw the rewards from labor; but the great cause, without which all other causes

were of little moment, has been proved by time to have been the lack of freedom in land and trade.

*Free Trade and Plenty.*

By the repeal of the corn laws, England enlarged the area of her agricultural resources. Free interchange annexed the food-growing acres of other nations. It was just as if so much fruitful land had risen from the sea. The United States became practically a part of England; as, by the Walker tariff of '46, England was made a part of the United States. The reward withheld from the laborer by the protective system at once began to be given to him in fuller measure.

It seems as if Providence designed that new and sparsely cultivated countries, like our own, should be made valuable for the support of old and densely populated countries, like England. Those who undertake to contravene this dispensation of Providence incur the Scriptural malediction upon those who withhold from the laborer his hire.


Men follow instinctively the true law when they pray for rich harvests. Presidents and governors of states recognize it when, in their messages, they thank God for abundant crops. What mockery it is to pray for abundance, and then construct artificial restrictions against using it! - Is there any difference between having food scarce by a bad harvest, and making it scarce by legal means?

If any one would know the effect of restriction, as seen in the withdrawal of stimulating rewards to industry, let him look at the effect of a bad harvest.

If any one would know the result of free trade, let him regard the consequences of an abundant harvest. Do wages fall? Is the home market bad? Do other branches of industry droop? Is labor displaced? We know it is not so. Abundance is a blessing. The rich blood from the fruitful land runs through every vein and artery of the industrial body, infusing life and power.

*The Tariff Curse.*

The corn laws caused destitution and scarcity. These were the forerunners of fever and revolution. All forms of disease sink into insignificance, when compared to these great predisposing agencies. It may be said, if other causes have slain their thousands, these have slain their tens of thousands. We talk to-day, much as they talked in England in 1846, of the hours of labor. There doubtless should be a modification of the hours and hardships of labor; but all legislation about them is useless when such tariffs exists as those before 1846. The building of poor-houses is a mockery; the talk about humanity, so glib upon the lips of some, is maudlin, and worse than mockery, while such laws as corn laws are in operation. Think of the reckless and criminal indulgence in cheap years, to balance the distress and scanty food of the dear years, and consider what inclination for craft and economy there is in such an arrangement of labor. The eight or ten hour rule, under such a system, would only give the operative more time to measure his despair. Poor laws may preserve him from starvation, but not from



the gnawing anxiety and distraction of the soul, from suffering cold, from insufficient clothes, from crowded tenement houses. What is milk to the child whose mother is harrassed by care, or stinted of wholesome food? Without such aliment, there is disease and premature death. Garbage cannot stay the grievance of hunger, nor the excitement of despair give respite from anxiety.

Under such conditions, affecting our kind in England, were the corn laws killed. These laws touched all the social organisms; the number and nature of diseases and crimes depended on them; they made increase of population a curse instead of a blessing; they palsied every energy; they paralyzed every nerve. Not the eloquence of Bright nor the statistics of Cobden, nor the hymns and rhymes of Elliott, could tell half the miseries which the poor of England suffered for the ten years preceding the repeal. Was there not some wilful and dangerous obstinacy in the English legislation? Has it been transmitted to their children in the New World? How many years did they listen to the cry of famished millions before they yielded relief? How often did they recall the statistics of starvation, crime and consumption, before they slaughtered the infamous statute? "How long, oh Lord, how long," were heard the piercing cries of the famished, and the hungry roar of the mob; heard even across the Atlantic, and heard in vain, until Sir Robert Peel raised his voice and demanded that justice be done!

Not only was the physical condition of the peo-



ple of England rendered miserable by this unnatural legislation. Minds and morals suffered as well. It is an old argument, all too familiar, that destitution leads to crime. The statistics of crime in England before the repeal of the corn laws illustrate how weak were codes, and how little reverence for magistrates, or care for personal safety, remained, when despair swayed the multitude. The first change in the corn laws was made in 1842. From that date the statistics show a decrease of the number of commitments: in 1843,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent; in 1844,  $10\frac{3}{4}$  per cent; in 1845,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent, on the preceding year. All this time the population was growing. In 1840-41-42, there were 1257 persons arrested on charges of sedition and riotous offences. In 1843-44-45, when some amelioration took place in the law, only 124 persons were committed on similar charges. Transportation of criminals grew less and less. "These social advantages," said Sir Robert Peel, "are concurrent with the relations of our protection to domestic industry." It was upon such facts as these that he had the courage to act. The operative who was always starved for bread, bread, bread, could not find time to devote to the improvement of his intellect. His body and soul were burdened by continual drudgery; all that was divine was smothered, all that was wolfish leaped into hot and eager life in the miserable struggle for existence.

But not alone was the working man degraded. True, the corn laws struck directly at the daily toilers for daily bread; the poor and the humble were their most conspicuous victims. But are not the

✓ | toiling masses the foundation of the State? If the foundation be insecure, is not the building itself in peril? Was ever oppression permitted that the oppressor did not suffer demoralization as well as him whose shoulders were bruised? The moral sense of the whole body of the people becomes diseased at last ; civil order is neglected ; the very fabric of society is threatened with destruction.

## CHAPTER VII.

### PLEAS FOR THE DEFENSE.

"There are who lord it o'er their fellow-men  
With most prevailing tinsel."

PROTECTION DUE TO PARTICULAR CLASSES—PLUNDERING CUSTOMERS TO STIMULATE TRADE—THE REVENUE PRETEXT—HUNDREDS TO THE GOVERNMENT, MILLIONS TO THE MONOPOLISTS—APPLICATION TO UNITED STATES—VESTED RIGHTS AND VESTED WRONGS.

IT is much easier to overthrow the protective argument, in a contest of pure logic, than it is to dispel from men's minds the vague cloud of half ideas which arise from traditional assertion or unreasoning prejudice. The Corn Law agitation is replete with examples, and a study of one or two of them may be useful.

#### *Protection Due to Agriculture.*

The corn laws, it was said, fostered agriculture; and to agriculture such care and consideration was due. The reasoning is on a par with that which sustains our protective system. To manufacturers is due a meed of protection greater than that which other classes of labor can claim.

Without arguing whether protection does protect, why is it due to agriculture, any more than to any

other department of industry? What is protection? Explained by its advocates, it is that policy, which, by increasing the price of any commodity, gives such a stimulus to its production that it will be created where it otherwise could not be. But was it for the benefit of the agriculturists of England that their food should be high? If not, protection did not benefit in this respect.

Is it for the benefit of the agriculturist that the consumers shall be compelled to purchase from him? The notion is plausible. But the facts declare the fallacy. Confine the consumer to the home market, and you practically confine the producer to it also. Instability is the direct result, and the losses by fluctuations more than destroy the extorted profits of monopoly.

Furthermore, one class cannot prey upon another without working out a retribution for itself. If the corn-growers plunder the manufacturers, they are but impoverishing their own customers. It has been reduced to a maxim, that the interests of the community, in all its different parts, are not antagonistic. Manufacturers are necessary for the existence of millions, and there are millions engaged in carrying them on; they are necessary for the support of the agriculturist. Whatever affects the one will affect the other. There is no real competition between them. To borrow the oft-quoted, but forcible language of Sir Josiah Child:—"Land and trade are twins, and always and ever will remain, and wax together;—you cannot shackle land but trade will feel it, nor trade, but land will fall."

Free land and free trade were "twinning and have no individual being."

As to the point of enlarged production:—Corn laws may indeed lead to the cultivation of more land; but is the land worth the application of labor and capital? Are the interests of the country to be sacrificed because certain land will not admit of a practical cultivation? The land owners of England, previous to 1846, forbade the community its freedom—not alone by tenure but by bread tax as well. They did what improvident men have often done when cheaper production was offered. They flung away the instrument of frugality and abundance. How much better or wiser were they than the mobs that have destroyed labor-saving machines? They would not suffer the cheap bread-making machines of their foreign rivals to be used. The cost of all production was increased in consequence. In every department of industry the fruits of labor were reduced. The mass suffered for the benefit of the few, and even the protected interest itself was ultimately crippled and impoverished, and those depending on it brought to distress.

*A Revenue is Needed.*

Again it was said, this protection is necessary to supply a revenue to the Government.

The answer to this plea is, that the revenue of the Government must be drawn from the pockets of the people. It should be drawn, therefore, by an equitable system of taxation. The protective plan provides a small measure of public revenue and a large measure of private plunder.

Customs duties are not the only means of revenue open to a Government. Especially is it true that a tariff such as ours is not the only means possible. The freer the trade the greater will be the tax income levied from it; the less the number of objects taxed by the customs duty, the more certain and stable will be the return. England attests this.

In this country, the protectionist device is to hide under indirection the burdens of the tariff. Now the standard of taxation is not the amount which is collected by the custom house. It is the amount which the consumer pays by reason of the enhanced cost of the "protected" article. For a striking illustration, take the period of our war, when the customs were paid in gold, and when gold was inordinately high. Add to the nominal customs tax, the difference between paper and gold, the cost of exchange, the importers profit, the wholesalers percentage, and the retailers ten per cent, and it is easy to see that our tariffs, which have furnished hundreds of millions to the treasury, have levied thousands of millions on the consumer.

### *Vested Interests.*

Once more, it was said that agriculture must be protected because of the "vested interests" grown up about the custom.

This reasoning would have more influence in an old country like England, more loath to change her laws and institutions of government, than our own. But, strange as it may seem, England has adopted a new order of economy with more promptness, and

held on to it with more tenacity than these new United States.

But there never was a wrong or grievance in a political organization for which this plea of vested right has not been made. It is not good as a general plea on the common grounds, much less as a special plea, when urged in defence of protection. It was contended with earnestness, by those who upheld the restrictive system, that agriculture was the primitive employment of man. Was it not Adam who delved when Eve span? Should not this primitive occupation be the source of National wealth? Why not, therefore, give it every paternal care and politic encouragement? For how many years did St. Stephens ring with the couplet about—

“That bold peasantry, their country’s pride ;  
Which once destroyed, can never be supplied.”

—while at the same time, the martyred Saint Stephen gave its legislation for the destruction of this very class.

All this eloquence and poetry about this bold peasantry is idle. In America, or in Russia, there might be some show of reason for it ; since the agriculturists are the most numerous and the dominating order ; but in England, so peculiarly fitted by nature for other purposes than agriculture, there is no reason for such ebullition of patriotism. This motive for maintaining the agriculturists, as a class, is a phantom as wild as that which would protect our manufacturers as a class in America. As well maintain that the clumsy wooden plow, of the time of Abra-

ham, and now used by the Kabyles in Algeria, or the Poeans of Mexico, should still be used in place of our labor, time, and skill-saving agricultural implements. Any department of industry which is the most profitable will crowd out the old and unprofitable. There should be no legislative hindrance to this displacement.

But the plea is shaped yet more definitely. It is contended that as restrictions have been continued for a long period, as much capital has been expended under the security they have afforded, and in the establishment of important interests,—that therefore such restrictions should still be maintained.

✓ | The fallacy is the ignoring of other “vested interests.” The protected class have no more right to consideration than have the classes which are asked to pay tribute to them. For example, a parliament of land owners passed the law of 1815. It wanted to keep up war prices. Its members did it under the cover of the bayonet. They were told when they did it, and they were told subsequently, in 1846, that these laws would be repealed when other interests and equities obtained predominance. If land holders had vested interests in 1815, had not the manufacturers and merchants also? This is a question of morals. If it was wrong to grant protection to one class at first, admitting that it was not economical, was it right to continue that wrong, when on every succeeding moment the wrong continued the aggravation? Can time sanctify injustice? Does sufferance make a grievance just? All things sinister and sinful, from the creeping of the serpent



into Eden, to the last jugglery with a railroad in America, are in a similar case. They are not to be tolerated because long practiced. When is it best to remove a wrong, that is a grievance, if not immediately on its ascertainment? There is the more reason for its removal, if it has centuries of its continuance behind. Must you wait, until starvation and revolution demand relief? That is a dangerous peril for society to approach. Relief, and bloodless relief is duty. Why not repeal immediately that which was immediately adopted?

Let us remember the words of Lord Bacon, so often illustrated since that illustrious man's time: "The froward retention of custom is as turbulent a thing as innovation."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### ENGLAND'S PRESENT LAND TROUBLES.

"The heir at law must be abandoned to the society of antiquarians."  
JEREMY BENTHAM.

RISE OF NEW CONDITIONS SINCE THE REPEAL—ENSLAVEMENT OF THE LAND—RELICS OF THE FEUDAL SYSTEM—THE CULTIVATOR BARRED FROM OWNERSHIP IN THE SOIL—AMERICAN COMPETITION—AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE.

IT is impossible to study the history of England's industry and commerce, in connection with the corn laws, without perceiving what a bar those laws were to her progress, and what a blessing was their expunging to every class of her people. And yet to-day there are many, both in England and in the United States, who point to the fact of the prevailing industrial distress in the United Kingdom, and ask with gloomy exultation: "What does your free trade theory amount to, after all?"

#### *What Free Trade Has Done.*

The question might be answered in several ways. The free trade theory when practically questioned,—by results,—amounts at least to this: that under its influence the exports of British products advanced by rapid strides from £63,596,000 in 1849, two years after the corn laws fell to £256,257,000 in 1872. It amounts to this: that the value of these exports *per*

*capita* of British population was £2 5s 11d, in 1849, and £6 2s 7d, in 1869. It amounts to this: that in 1840, the British merchant navy covered 3,311,000 tons, and in 1879, it reached 8,266,000 tons.

Taking the importation of those articles which peculiarly indicate the comfort of the masses, we find these comparisons, on a *per capita* basis:—sugar, imported in 1852, 28.15 lbs; in 1877, 54.06 lbs. Tea, imported in 1852, 2.00 lbs; in 1877, 4.52 lbs. Tobacco, imported in 1852, 1.04 lbs; in 1877, 1.49 lbs. Spirits, imported in 1852, 1.10 gals; in 1877, 1.23 gals.

The free trade theory amounts to this: that thirty years ago not over a third of the English people had meat to their potatoes more than once a week, while now, in spite of the failure of home crops, nearly all have animal food of some kind every day.

In a word, the theory of unrestricted commercial intercourse has amounted to a thirty year's rain of good things, whose virtue has gone to the roots and into the sap of the national tree; whose vital power has thrown out the branches and blossoms of British empire into every clime; whose fruit has made glad a generation of Britons, putting rich blood into their veins and manly pith into their limbs. This much cannot be denied. There are the facts. They confirm theory.

If there be distress in England to-day, it is distress in comparison with a scale of well-being vastly higher than that of the old protective era. "Distress" under the corn laws meant cold and hunger;

it meant nakedness and starvation, it meant riot and arson, robbery and murder; it meant the thrusting out of workmen from the workshop to learn how to maintain existence as beasts of prey—inventing new crimes, discovering fresh iniquities, perishing miserably and with imprecations against mankind and heaven. “Distress” to-day in England has no such signification. Its limit is the abandonment of home, emigration, and the beginning of life anew in a new world. This is hardship enough. Far be it from me to make light of it. But compared with the utter ruin which involved the toilers in industrial stoppages under the reign of the corn laws, the troubles of the present time seem small indeed.

*Free Land the Need.*

But the case need not be rested here. The “Free Trade” doctrine has a wider sweep than most people perceive. “For all her free trade,” says the critic, “England’s agriculture is to-day in a sorry state. The corn laws were abolished in 1846, and now, a generation after, we find her farmers forsaking the soil.”

England has free trade—in a measure. But has she free land? Trade is not really free while the land is enslaved, and England’s land is enslaved indeed. The soil is not owned by those who cultivate it. The farmer can get but an insecure lease at a rent rate ever more oppressive; he is hedged about by all sorts of conditions as to management—conditions prescribed, often, by dictators dead for a century. Real owners—there are no real owners! The

nominal owner has but a life estate, and commonly is so burdened besides, that if he had the inclination, he has not the power, to do for the land that which its development requires.

England's greatest need to-day is free land. The clamor is rising for the breaking of the shackles of feudalism, as it rose for the repeal of the corn laws. And it is a mistake to suppose that the English government is not awake to the necessity of considering the questions which the new conditions are forcing into prominence? The committees recently named by the Commons have made reports connected with the laws of primo-geniture, succession, titles and transfers of real estate. Whatever may be the old reluctance, formulated in Latinity, as to changing the English law, and however ancient may be the learning connected with English feudality, the Middle Ages are going out of English jurisprudence. Pressure comes out of the very necessities of English and Irish life. The old phrases which Blackstone has made familiar, will soon become as dead as the black letter of the early English eras.

Yet most of the propositions made for reform are but scratches upon the surface, and do not relieve the organic trouble. Simplify as English statesmen may the modes of transfer and registry of land,—copy as they may our American law of record, so as to make transfers public; still the disease remains, so long as the law of inheritance remains. "Hereditaments" is a word which English philology must obliterate from its most recondite glossary. It has worked incalculable injustice to women as well as

men ; to elder brothers even, as well as other brothers and sisters. Why should an estate tail be created for one sex and not another ? Where is the limit to a leasehold ? Why should one kind of property have certain conditions, and not another ?

Until all these anomalies of the English law are made straight and equitable, Revolution is still possible for the reformation of great evils connected with the English land system. The great reformer of the future is that man who will bestow upon the men who work the land the absolute estate. Property ought to be fixed in him who is most concerned in its use. When land is truly free, it is subject to no conditions, no exactions, except those which a frugal government may make by honest taxation for its support. Not until then, will the terrors and trials incident to the unequal distribution of property and wealth cease. Not until then, will agitation for a better division of land and its product cease.

Mr. Holyoke, the English coöperatist reformer, has said that in the richest and thriftiest part of England, as in Norfolk, farms are abandoned altogether ; while throughout that county wheat is given up, and grazing is taking its place. He estimates that there is a decrease in the cultivation of wheat the past year of 328,000 acres ! He exclaims that there has not been such a state of things in England since the Norman Conquest. He asks : Can it be that England is worse off than Ireland ? Has not Ireland a free church and some compensation to tenants ? Is the remedy to be found in the protective system, by the revival of the corn laws ? This he thinks to be impos-

sible, as it would only double the price of bread to the poor. Coöperation and colonization are his remedy.

The Royal Commission is at work to develop the causes and the means of relief; but if they fail to remove entail and primogeniture, where is the remedy that will last? The best minds in England are keenly awake to the real issue. What could be stronger or clearer than the bold and honest words of John Bright, uttered recently at Birmingham?—

“I would say that whenever a man owning land died without a will, his land should be subject to exactly the same rule of division as that now applied to personal property. I would put an end to the system of entail. I would so legislate that the present generation should be the absolute owners of the land, and the next generation should be the absolute owners; but neither this nor the next generation should be able to dictate to future generations who should own it.”

This goes to the root—and it may be that we in America have something to learn from the admonition.

### *England's Agricultural Misfortunes.*

But there are other reasons—reasons having no connection with laws or the repeal of laws—for the prevailing distress among the agriculturists of England. The past four seasons have been full of disasters which the skies have sent. The quantity of rain has been unexampled. The average yield has been very small. Even after the grain was in the stack, the chances for fine weather vanished. The deficiency

has been estimated at one hundred million bushels of wheat. An unexampled agricultural distress in the three kingdoms is the result. No generosity on the part of the landlords; no commissions on the part of Parliament; and no law framed in the interest of tenant proprietorship can do away with the pressure which new conditions have brought.

The only point to which protectionist objections can be attached is that of the competition, under free trade, of the Western fields of the United States with the farms of England. The advocates of restriction, scarcity and starvation are welcome to what they can find here.

Before the days of American rivalry, there was a fair percentage made by the frugal English farmer. Now he cannot grow wheat with any profit; or at least the profit is very limited. The annual rent paid by the English farmer would purchase outright good grain soil in the west of America, as much as he could comfortably cultivate. Owing to the improvement of agricultural implements, greater facility in handling the crops, less necessity for manure, and a different mode of cultivation, the American producer can land wheat at Liverpool at \$1.12 a bushel, with a good return to both farmer and merchant. He can land beef, raised upon his ranches in the west and southwest, for ten and twelve cents a pound, at a fair profit. The cost to the English farmer on the other hand is not less than \$1.50 a bushel for wheat, and at least sixteen cents a pound for beef. Cheese and other articles are to be reckoned in the same proportion.



The English land system is responsible for much of this. But English obstinacy must bear its share of blame also.

The English seem to have neither the skill nor the will to get out of their old ruts. The same old crops are raised in the same old way. They have expected to get the same old prices with the same old profits. They can hardly realize that for the past five years, owing to our American competition and their disastrous weather, they have been failing both in their yield and their gains. Observers have remarked, and with truth, that the American farmer can raise his produce from the soil at one-third less expense than the English farmer.

But let not the American farmer settle himself too confidently at ease. Whether this condition of affairs will continue, depends somewhat on the whimsical nature of wind and cloud, and perhaps not a little upon the legislative action or inaction of Great Britain and the United States. An abundant harvest throughout England and the Continent might make marvellous changes. The reformation of the British land laws would set the wheels of a trade revolution in motion. And—a last suggestion—if the American farmer does not soon find out that he pays a heavy percentage,—not less than forty per cent average,—out of his farm profits for the goods which come from abroad, he will have to learn it to his cost.

## CHAPTER IX.

### IRELAND; HER LAND TROUBLES AND THEIR ORIGIN.

“ Ever to moil, ever to toil, that is your social charter,  
And, city slave or peasant serf, the toiler is its martyr.”


CHARLES GAVAN DUFFY.

EARLY IRISH TENURE—PLUNDER OF THE LAND IN THE ELIZABETHAN WARS—THE CROMWELLIAN SETTLEMENT—RELIGIOUS PERSECUTIONS—ENGLAND'S OPPRESSIVE TRADE POLICIES—SUPPRESSION OF IRISH INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE.

THE noise of an agricultural if not an agrarian conflict comes over the water from Ireland. It concerns chiefly the freedom of land. To most Americans it conveys hardly a more definite idea than that darted into the mind by a sudden clamor arising in the night. We hear of failing crops and heartless landlords; of extortionate rents and despotic agents; of barbarous evictions, of broken families, of starvation, of brutality, of despair, of murder. We read of seditious gatherings, because of the land system. A whole people is writhing under a tyranny that proceeds from the land system. Multitudes are ready to pour out blood and treasure to overturn the land system; and one of the proudest nations of the earth is sending out spies, reinforcing its barracks, imprisoning orators, dispersing meetings,—that the threatened outbreak may be

nipped in the bud or provoked to a premature demonstration.

What does it mean? Many there are who quote with a laugh: "An Irishman is never at peace unless he is fighting." And with this small witticism, the blackest page in the history of civilized times is complacently folded down; and the anguish which has torn the heart of Ireland for centuries, is described as "the national spirit of restlessness and discontent." The red story of the English conquest, with its sequel of pillage and oppression, is hidden from sight, while the despoiled victims are reviled and ridiculed for their unthrifty ways and their turbulent temper. "The Irish are never quiet. If it were not an agrarian uprising it would be something else; anything, so long as there is chance of riot and of curses upon Britain."



The very prevalent opinion—prevalent not only among the conservative elements of England, but in the United States as well, where such ignorance of Ireland's bitter struggles is inexcusable—is right in one particular and only one: the strife that is now running to its crisis is not an exceptional outburst. It is but a link in the chain of insurgent efforts that have made up the history of Ireland from the day when Henry VII. began, and Elizabeth completed, the subjugation.

An adequate recital of the centuries of Ireland's ills is here clearly impracticable; but there can be no understanding of the present facts of the land troubles, much less of the burning feelings which lie back of all Irish complainings, without an

intelligent regard for the historical roots of the existing order, or disorder.

### *The Early Land System.*

Under the ancient system, established by the Brehon laws, the holding of land in Ireland was communistic. The tribal chiefs were not the owners, but the guardians of the soil. The humblest member of the clan was a co-proprietor with the proudest ; and, while subject to tribute, he could not be ejected. The chiefs, moreover, were elected by the common voice, although the field of choice was limited to certain families. Hundreds of years ago, then, in as high a degree of development as was permitted by the age, and in a land where St. Patrick was the patron of education, Ireland possessed the two great institutions for which her noblest sons have given their lives in vain : republican government and secure tenure for all upon the soil of their country.


### *English Rapacity.*

These institutions were broken up by England, by the simple processes of murder and confiscation. The Elizabethan wars, by which English dominion in Ireland was first made an actuality, were wars of plunder. They are incomprehensible as wars of political ambition ; and the common theory of religious fanaticism breaks down utterly before the facts of the loyalty of the most powerful Catholic localities and the presence of Catholics in English armies. The motive was the seizure of the lands, the enrichment of the Queen's favorites, by the robbery of a people who might be

crushed beyond possibility of retaliation. The design was carried out in the spirit of its conception. The march of victory was characterized by atrocities that capped the excesses of Alva and by sufferings that have no parallel, except within the walls of falling Jerusalem.

When resistance was at an end, when massacre, burning and starvation had reduced the people to the submission of despair, the purpose of the invaders became even more obvious. Charges of treason were fabricated against the chiefs, and executions made an easy road to the acquirement of rich acres. The rights of the clansmen were ignored. They were the true owners ; but since it would have been tedious to await their extermination, the ready plan was adopted of regarding the chief as the proprietor, and putting him to death to make room for the English adventurer.

Such was the beginning of English titles to Irish land. Such was the fountain of those "rights of property" of which we now hear so much, and the infringement of which by a hair's breadth is so flagrant a crime ! Following the confiscation by the sword and the gallows, came legal juggles. Under them robberies almost incredible were perpetrated, in the name of justice. Then, indeed, entered religious zeal ; yet so mixed and inwoven with a rapacity for land forfeitures as to deprive it of the grim dignity which church persecution has often manifested.



I have not space to follow out the sorrowful tale ; the inquisitions of Wentworth, the confiscations

of Charles, the land-jobbing of the Lord Justices, and the furious agrarian outbreak of 1641. Neither can I dwell on the horrors of the war which ensued under Cromwell, and which resulted in the extirpation of more than a third of Ireland's population, the banishment of forty thousand of her able bodied men, the exportation of hundreds of women and children to slavery and baser fates and—inevitable factor!—the confiscation of three-fourths of the soil. In another forum, during the civil war, when the question was practically presented for legislation, I amply discussed this painful subject of confiscation. It is to me *infandum dolorem*.

### *The Origin of Absenteeism.*

But here a line of departure must be marked in the land tenure. The Cromwellian Settlement fixed upon Ireland that curse of foreign ownership of the soil which has made her politically an outcast and socially a slave. The three richest counties were given over to English money-lenders and military adventurers; and the Irish owners,—whether guilty of rebellion or not,—were deprived of their estates, and driven upon reservations in rocky and desolate Connaught. An assault was made on this settlement, it is true, during the brief period of Jacobite hopes, but the battle of the Boyne put an end to that, and fresh confiscations welded the last links of Ireland's slavery.

### *Religious Persecutions.*

A century of relentless persecutions followed.

How were they justified? By a mockery. They were justified as the will of Heaven for the overthrow of a corrupted church,—yet directed with singular efficiency to the material advantage of Englishmen and the plunder of the native Irish. Not to mention severer laws, which operated to drive the people into exile, there were such direct attacks upon property as these: Catholics could not dispose of their lands by sale, mortgage or bequest; they were cut off, in inheritance from Protestant relations; they could not lease land for more than thirty-one years; they were prohibited from making more than a certain rate of profit in farming;—and if they dared to prosper above the limit, their leases were forfeit to the spy who discovered the fact.

While agriculture was thus made shameful and barren to them, laws without number were enacted, barring them from every trade which offered hope of remuneration.

### *Irish Industries Crushed.*

Struggling under these complications of religious disabilities, the Irish nevertheless began to find new openings for their industrial energy. They began to rival the English in the products of the pasture. Then England hardened her heart, and stretched out her hand to crush that. "Protection" to her own people was then the plea. The slavery of Ireland and her land was not enough. English natural rights were shackled for the benefit of the few. Absolute prohibition was enacted against the importation into England of Irish cattle, sheep, swine, beef, pork,

mutton, butter and cheese. Then the people turned to their magnificent harbors and the open sea; and straightway they were forbidden the colonial carrying trade. They established sheep-walks and demonstrated their ability to compete with the world in the manufacture of wool; and the British Parliament imposed duty upon duty, and finally, by an utter prohibition of *exports*, annihilated the industry altogether.

"An Irishman is never at peace unless he is fighting." What else was there left to do? What wonder that the "Rapparees" took, by so-called violence, that which would have been theirs by just inheritance?—that the "Whiteboys" matched the British "protective" tariffs by slaughtering the cattle of the foreign stock-breeders?—that the "Hearts of Steel" opposed the rapacity of the English landlords by lynching and intimidation among the relentless agents? This was the rude justice which rapacity provoked and which ages of wrong seem to justify.

### *A Military Argument.*

It is a note-worthy fact that the first break in this crushing rule was a consequence of England's own heartlessness. When the French threatened invasion, Ireland looked to the country that had drained her resources for aid. She was told she must defend herself. The result was the Irish Volunteers! It was with this army in the background as a menace, that Grattan, Charlemont and Flood were enabled to secure a partial independence of the



Irish legislature and the repeal of certain acts of disabilities against Catholics.

"The Irish love fighting." Why should they not? The rebellion of '98, ending in torture and butchery, and costing fifty thousand Irish lives, at least accomplished this: that it testified to the unquenchable spirit of the land and compelled Englishmen at last to consider whether a policy of unremitting oppression was altogether profitable. It was said: "Insurrection is meat and drink to them." The mad *emueite* of Robert Emmet was to Englishmen but the rash fury of the patriotic zealot. It was sedition, perhaps. But whatever it may be called, it was out of that spirit that the formidable body of conspirators, the Catholic association, arose. It beat down opposition in the pathway of O'Connell and put into his hands the weapons with which he achieved the "Act of Catholic Emancipation."

It is not necessary to the present purpose to pursue the historical thread to the end. I grant for the moment, all that can be claimed of the more reasonable treatment of Ireland during the last fifty years. It has not been enough to do away with the evils of the past, much less to obliterate the memories which make the English flag hated through all Ireland. Fifty years, even were they crowded with the wisest legislation, could not repair the work of thirty generations of destruction.

## CHAPTER X.

### IRISH LAND—WRONGS AND REMEDIES.

Their good, ill, health, wealth, joy, discontent,  
Being, end, aim, religion—Rent ! Rent ! Rent !

BYRON.

THE LAND MONOPOLY—ABSENTEEISM—PRIMOGENITURE AND SETTLEMENTS—INSECURITY OF TENURE—DISCOURAGEMENT OF IMPROVEMENTS—BARRIERS AGAINST ALTERNATIVE INDUSTRIES—FREE LAND THE RADICAL REMEDY.

THE points around which the Irish controversy rages with greatest violence are, naturally, rack-rents and unjust evictions. These are the cutting edges of the oppressive land system :—intolerable exactions of tribute to an absent lord, and, on failure to pay, the speedy loss of home and of the means of livelihood.

The significance of these points reveals itself with difficulty to the American mind, accustomed as we are to regard land as free. Why submit to an extortionate rent ? Why accept a farm without the security of a proper lease ? The answer must be sought in the mass of oppressive conditions with which the Irish tillers of the soil are burdened. These are the legacies of the freebooting thrift of Elizabeth's gallant defenders, of the pious rage of Cromwell, and of the motherly care of England for her own children and her own children's pockets.

*The Land Monopoly.*

In the first place, land-owning is a monopoly in Ireland, as it is in nearly the whole United Kingdom. One-third of the island is the property of but 292 persons. A body of 744 persons own the half. Two-thirds is the possession of 1,942 owners, and vast tracts of the remaining third belong to others only under the nominal proprietorship of long leases.

*Absenteeism.*

Secondly: Absenteeism largely prevails. The landlord does not live on the soil whence he draws his revenues. He has no care for Ireland except as the source of his pecuniary supplies. He has no sympathy with his tenants; he knows nothing of them, whether they fare well or ill. He does not spread among them—as often the resident gentry do in England—that knowledge of the means of prosperity and comfort which has always required capital and leisure for its development. He hands over his charge to an agent—and regards him as a good agent in proportion to the bulk of his returns. He drains the wealth of his lands and gives back nothing.

*Primogeniture and Settlements.*

Third: By the systems of primogeniture and family settlements, both the monopoly and the absenteeism are sustained; while at the same time the land is more and more divorced from the capital necessary to keep it in fruitful condition. This is strenuously denied, and indeed the contrary is often affirmed; but the logic of the matter is simple enough. The

custom of primogeniture—almost as imperative now with English land owners as the law previously was—puts a “family estate,” undivided, into the hands of a single person, without regard to his ability to manage it. The system of settlements, charges and trusts follows hard behind, to tie up the ostensible owner, to interfere with his actions, and to burden him with payments which he must make out of the fruits of the soil to sisters, brothers, aunts and cousins. It is true that the “Incumbered Estates Act,” and the court established under it, have ameliorated these difficulties somewhat; but they yet remain with a severity that is cruelly felt upon so feeble a body as the agricultural interest of Ireland.

#### *Exorbitant Rents.*

Fourth: Rackrents follow naturally from monopoly, foreign ownership and heavy encumbrances. But conditions yet to be named give still great scope to the extortionate usage.

#### *Insecure Tenure.*

Fifth: The leasing practice has almost died out. The farmer has no secure tenure, but is held by the landlord or the agent in constant fear of eviction. Doubtless there are exaggerations in the stories told on this head. But there is need of none. The kettle is scarcely blacker for the paint. We need not hunt for authentic accounts of whole villages laid waste by bailiffs. It is no fictitious picture—that of the sick thrust out on the roadside, and of

the aged and feeble standing on the spot where their dwelling was the night before.

These are they to whom the English economists mildly advise emigration! "Emigrate, you poor, misguided, obstinate people! Stricken with poverty, hunger and disease, why do you remain? See the golden fields of America and the happiness which awaits you there! Emigrate, emigrate!"

Yet it is not necessary to follow the evil to its extremity. An insecure tenure is a constant curse. It destroys ambition, and weighs down hope. Its results are seen in almost every quarter of Ireland, (excepting in "tenant right" Ulster, where something like security is obtained,) in dilapidated buildings, ruined fields, rust and neglect.

#### *Bars to Improvements.*

Sixth: Closely connected with insecure tenure is the evil of the rules relating to improvements. The tenant has no protection. He improves at his peril. The owner takes what he may create, and not only that, but he may evict him to get possession of the new advantages—or may raise the rent as the reward of his diligence. It is often charged that the poverty-stricken condition of the Irish farms is an evidence of the Irishman's laziness. Yet many a cottier will reclaim waste land, in the face of the greatest risk of having the good inure to the landlord alone.

#### *No Alternative.*

Seventh: The Irish have no alternative vocation. England has taken away from them all else. If they

remain in the country of their birth, they must dig their living out of the ground or they must be buried under it. In the famine years, which under this wretched system recur with dreadful frequency, they are buried by thousands. They die daily of insufficient food and shelter.

Let this review of the causes of the enslavement of Irish land suffice.

Is it any wonder that Irish agriculture does not thrive? Is it any wonder that Ireland's soil is depleted, that her people live in hovels, that her children flee by thousands to more hospitable lands, and that those who remain struggle in their discontent and plot revolution? They must have been clods or less than worms not to struggle, not to conspire for liberty, not to fight desperately at every gleaming of hope, not to make use of every embarrassment of England as Ireland's opportunity. The day will come when Emmet will rank with Kosciuszko, not only in the eyes of poets, who look purely to the nobleness of the soul's endeavor, but in the estimation of statesmen as well, who will come to see that his heroic life did not end on the gallows-tree at Dublin, but remained with his countrymen to rouse and inspire, until the cause was won for which he suffered a martyr's death.

### *The Remedies.*

Turning now to the question of remedies, it may be noted that as rackrents and unjust evictions stand first in the popular apprehension of grievances, "valuation" and "fixed tenure" are most promi-

nently put forward as the farmer's rights. By "valuation" is meant a rent appraisalment by arbitrators, and by "fixed tenure" is meant what seems tantamount to a transfer of ownership to the tenant, subject to a sort of quit rent. The reader will make a mistake if he sets the seal of his disapproval on these propositions with the easy confidence of the majority of English and American lawyers.

"They are a violation of the rights of property," say the men of law. The history of those rights in Ireland is a proper response. But if any man lives who has not yet rid his mind of the notion that there is any such thing as an absolute right in land, let him consider that that right has been again and again annihilated by revolutions consequent upon violations of the duties of property. John Stuart Mill spoke without compunction for the transfer of the land to the Irish tenants upon payment of a fair valuation to the present owners in the form of a quit rent. Cliffe Leslie advocates government aid to the tenants to enable them to purchase. John Bright has thrown the weight of his name in favor of the transfer of ownership, by legislation, to the tenantry. The Landed Estates Court is a standing violation of the rights of property. The peaceful revolution effected by Stein and Hardenburg in Prussia was a violation of the rights of property; yet it has left its leaders famous, as among the greatest of benefactors of the race.

We need not be in haste to denounce the most radical plans for the reform of the Irish land system. Things cannot be radically worse. Neither need we

deceive ourselves with the hope of peace short of the accomplishment of most radical changes. The existing order must in the end be entirely revolutionized ; those that till the soil must own it ; tribute to foreigners must cease. The only question is that of the methods, speedy or gradual, by which the agricultural interests, and with them the whole industrial estate of Ireland, can be brought back to natural conditions. It is not so improbable as most seem to think, that the British Parliament will suffer some bill to pass cutting off the great proprietors from real ownership in their Irish estates.

But however this may be, the immediately practical measures are sufficiently an outrage to the conservative taste. If they are taken, it will be victory enough until the times are ripe for further advances. These measures are very similar to those demanded by the farmers and land reformers of England ; first, the abolition of primogeniture ; second, rigid restrictions on the custom of land settlements ; third, security for improvements ; fourth, cheap and safe methods of real estate conveyances. Laws in these directions would militate only against aristocratic selfishness and vanity ; they would lead to stability of tenure ; they would tend to the breaking up of great estates and the establishment of that peasant proprietary which may yet be the salvation of Ireland.

In a word, the land must be free—free to fall away from hands incapable of doing it justice, free from burdens which properly belong elsewhere, free to receive the care which interested and intelligent culture would give it and free to gravitate toward



such ownership, great or small, as will best secure its development and the well-being of those who live upon it.

Free land in Ireland will then mean free industry and free trade. Nothing now prevents the rise of manufactures and commerce but the serfdom of the masses and the draining of the country's surplus into foreign coffers. Let the land be free, and Ireland will have entered the race for rivalry with the richest countries of the earth.

## CHAPTER XI.

### LEGALIZED ROBBERIES.

A Bread tax, a Bread tax, will be just the thing!  
To beggar the wealthy, by robbing the poor,  
To mortgage the meadow, by stealing the moor.

EBENEZER ELLIOTT.

THEFT AND REPRISAL—"A FREE BREAKFAST TABLE"—MUTUAL  
BRIGANDAGE—PAUPER LABOR—PROTECTION AGAINST THE SUN  
—TERRIBLE EVILS OF FOREIGN WATER POWER.

When the law, which was intended to prevent wrong,—which is the asylum of those who are liable to forceful exactions upon their land and trade, becomes the source of wrong itself, then, indeed, does injustice increase and multiply. As in England and Ireland, not merely is capital wasted, not merely does production cease, not merely does emigration increase, but even violence is periodical and civil war a probability.

It is one of the marvels of our time, that we have been undergoing a system of taxation by a duty levied on imports, not for the specific purpose of revenue, but to compel the mass of the people to contribute to a peculiar class,—which is nothing more nor less than robbery in the form of law.

This legalized robbery is hedged about with plausible and captivating names. It is called protection. It is done under the form of a tariff—whose

very title implies a tax—by bargainers for their own private greed. The catch-words that belong to economy should deceive no one. Protection, taken at its proper reckoning, is simply no protection or worse. In Tartary they have a more polite way of robbery, says M. Huc. They present a pistol to the traveller, call him dear brother, and then take his coat and horse.

*Reciprocal Brigandage.*

When a devotee of protection is driven into a corner, he is very prompt to make the confession that he simply desires to reprise, by a bounty or larceny, what has been stolen from him by some other “protectionist.” I remember a congressman from western Maryland who begged Congress not to throttle the infantile coal interest of Cumberland, because Cumberland paid so much more for every other article upon which there was a tariff tax.

If Michigan can steal on copper, Maine on lumber, Pennsylvania on iron, North Carolina on peanuts, Massachusetts on cotton goods, Connecticut on hairpins, New Jersey on spool thread and silk, Louisiana on sugar, and so on, why could not Maryland steal on coal from each and all? What though but a few reap the benefit, does it not tend to high prices and scarcity, and does not larceny encourage industry, and contribute to abundance? What though the salt of Onondaga, New York,—where the natural saline resources of the country are evaporated by cheap sunshine—is made dear to the people? Has not Massachusetts another compensating robbery?

And while she gets salt free for her fish, is she not willing to see Onondaga have a protection of twelve cents on every hundred bushels of salt? But she is not so content to see Canadian fish come to us all free! It is only a question of the relative immorality of Bill Sykes and the Artful Dodger. All the small communities of little production claim to be protected equally with the grand larcenies of large communities.

Allow another illustration. Much has been said about a "free breakfast table." The demagogic prejudice has been aroused against those who would levy a tax on tea and coffee. "Let us at least," they say, "sit down to our morning meal without seeing a tax bill in every dish!" Now a duty on tea and coffee is a perfectly fair revenue tax; the commodities are not raised in the United States, and what we pay goes into the public treasury and not into private coffers. Nevertheless,—“Let us have a free breakfast table! Take off these taxes on the comfort of the people!” The tea and coffee duties are abolished and lo! we have a free breakfast table! Have we, indeed? Do we not know that in order that those who joined in the patriotic clamor may not be cut off from their customary spoils, we pay duties on everything connected with the breakfast table and otherwise, until there is nothing left of it that is not burdened. One guest, by means of the tariff, would pocket the knife and fork, another the salt and salt-cellar, another the cream jug, plates and sugar bowl, another the cloth, the bread and potatoes, and another the chinaware. Some brawny Robert

McCaire would carry off the table, by a tax on lumber, while a sly Jean Jacques, to encourage domestic cookery, slips into the kitchen, and carries away the stove and coals; and the food, wherewithal the table itself is furnished, is enhanced in price, by the larceny on steel rails, at the increased cost of three thousand dollars for every mile of transportation! This is all done to increase the general comfort! It does not make the breakfast table free, but it makes free with the breakfast table.

It is, as Bastiat called it, reciprocal brigandage; and none the less so, because under legal forms. It is said the Devil loves that cheating best, that is done by statute; therefore his affection for this form of robbery.

### *Pauper Labor.*

Men sound the word protection with such a voice as to remind one of the Greek tragedian who spoke through the mask, and whose noise was more awful, because of the majestic buskin which raised his ordinary figure to the kingly height of Agamemnon. In place of this loud sounding phrase, the still small voice of reason calmly asks,

“Instead of treasure robbed by ruffian war,—  
Round social earth to circle fair exchange,  
And bind the nations in a golden chain.”

The great argument used for protection is, that under its auspices, we can produce in the United States without using the cheaper labor from abroad for the articles of our consumption. It is

vauntingly asked: "Is it not obvious that if the article from abroad is made at starvation wages, its importation would injure trade and glut the market?"

If the pauper labor of Europe goes too far, the protectionist would not merely restrict; he would prohibit. In that case he would illustrate the parable of the French economist;—he would close all windows and skylights, inside and outside, shutters, curtains, blinds, bulls-eyes, openings, chinks, clefts, and fissures, whereby the sun enters to the disadvantage of the manufacturer of wicks, lights, candles, candle-sticks, lamps, snuffers, street lamps, extinguishers, and the producers of oil, tallow, resin and alcohol. In other words, the sun-beam is cheap capital and cheap labor; it is a free trader engaged in the destruction of American industry.

"No cheap and plentiful light from abroad," is the cry of the protectionist. Let us cry for petroleum against the external competition of daylight. Light is an uppish, solar foreigner, and should not rival the coal gas from Pennsylvania. Light is alien. It is cheap pauper labor. It innundates us half the time. Your Joshua, who is a protectionist, would have it stand still, lest coal and gas be ruined. The market for gas, candle-sticks, and gas burners should not be disturbed. Oh, no! for is not light a secret enemy, purchased with foreign gold? Quench it, and artificial light will be gorgeous and bountiful, though dear. How many domestic industries does not the prism destroy? It saps the foundations of agriculture; for is not tallow of the sheepfold? It destroys the oil market, plugs the gushing wells, and

interferes with transportation. It throws out of employment workmen innumerable, and reduces the wages of such as are left. Under this policy of free light, what becomes of the whaling industries of New England? Who protects the heroes of the harpoon? The very bronzes, gildings, crystals, lamps, and spacious saloons of the rich are useless half the time, because illumined by the proximity of the sun.

We should build an opaque roof, ribbed with steel, over the land. What matter the expense? Every American coal-bunk and American mine will furnish the material for an American-made gas retort. No gratuities of nature, no natural wealth. Give labor a chance. Let manufacture thrive. Down with the sun—imprison electricity,—and up with old Chaos and darkness! And while cheap foreign labor is forbidden in its products at the Custom House, forget not also to bar out from Castle Garden the cheap foreign laborer who comes thither, with light in his eye and iron in his blood.

Go to Rochester in the State of New York, and you will find water-power in abundance. It grinds the wheat, and makes the flour, by seeking its level through gravity. It is the Naiad which whirls the wheel; it works cheaply for the welfare of man. It costs little to harness it. A large loaf at less price is the consequence.

But suppose that water came from the Canadian side,—unpatriotic water, unglorified hydrostatics,—dare it be used to cheapen bread? Is it not foreign, and worse than foreign,—even British; and worse

than British,—provincial British; and worse than provincial British,—French, and Indian? And why should not that water be dammed by the patriot? Why should we not catch and kill the Naiad—tear out the water wheels, and insert in their stead, steam-engines driven by Lehigh caloric, from anthracite produced on our own soil and ever demanding protection as infantile, though planted by Providence and the sunshine millions of years ago?

If our yearly five millions of protected manufactures command it, why not? Give them the average bounty of forty-five per cent! Let “cottons” call for the robbery of thirty-seven per cent; for must not our people keep cool in summer, to help the infants of New England? Let “woolens” receive their fifty-six per cent bounty; for must not our people keep warm in winter to help the young industries? Why not? Do not double duties give less revenue? Why then allow foreign blankets to cover our sleeping children, even if the fabric does pay ninety-five per centum? Does not this rapine protect quinine and give to ague and fever, which periodically visit our people, fresh vigor? Why not, then, raise the banner for mutual spoliations?



## CHAPTER XII.

### PANICS AND CRISES AS AFFECTED BY FREE TRADE.

"The example held forth to us by the Americans of strict economy, of peaceful non-interference, of universal education and other public improvements, may and indeed must be emulated by the people of this country, if the people are to be allowed even the chance of surviving a competition with that Republican community."

SIR RICHARD COBDEN.

CAUSES OF ENGLAND'S MISFORTUNES—QUERIES FOR THE AMERICAN PROTECTIONIST—ENGLAND'S SPECULATIVE FEVER—THE TARIFFS OF THE UNITED STATES, GERMANY AND HOLLAND—AGRICULTURAL DISTRESS.

WE have seen how utterly the varied policies of restriction failed in England, and how with every advance to liberty, good followed abundantly. Nevertheless it is urged that the free trade policy has broken down: it has not been able to ward off commercial crises. To this it may be a sufficient answer to ask, Has the protective system warded off industrial troubles in the United States? This question has more point than the other; for it never was pretended that free trade would prevent industrial crises, while the protective system, in the fulness of its glory, as developed in 1861, was ushered in by its advocates as the harbinger and preserver of unbroken peace and ever-swelling prosperity. That promise has come to nothing and to worse than nothing. During the four years following 1873, the

United States has experienced such industrial throes as never racked it before.

The protective policy has not been able to ward off panics and crises. Yet, perhaps, it has behind it, as English free trade has, a story of benefits conferred which must be reckoned in the balance of its merits. The abolition of the corn laws gave the people of England cheap food. Their manufacturers, besides, were permitted to get their materials where they could find them best and cheapest, and to carry them to their factories by the least expensive means of transportation. They were allowed to put their goods into any market, and take their pay in whatever form was most profitable. What was the result? Bread was cheap, clothing was cheap, comfort was cheap. The capital of the country piled up apace, and the standard of living among the masses improved year by year. Perhaps the United States has benefits of equal value to show as the fruits of its protective system. What can it exhibit? This, in the first place: that the protected commodities (and what commodities have not been protected?) have, under an average duty of forty per cent and more, been increased in price at least twenty per cent. Putting the annual product of domestic manufacture at no more than \$3,000,000,000, we may charge to "protection" a yearly tax on the whole people of \$600,000,000, not one penny of which goes into the public treasury.

Would that these figures represented the immense total; but they do not represent one half of the burden and bounty. They are placed at the

very least sum lest incredulity refuse to investigate. Of the total manufactures of the United States,—about five thousand millions,—hardly one hundred millions are exported. If the remainder which is consumed here were imported, the duties would not be much less than two thousand millions, (estimated exactly at \$1,861,067,000,) which would seek the Treasury, and not the pockets of the splendid paupers who live upon it. This is the premium paid to unfitness, incompetency and something which we may call selfish shrewdness,—the small cunning which takes the place of wisdom.

Meanwhile our manufacturers have been hampered in every movement. They cannot obtain their crude materials where they can find them best ; they are forbidden to use natural resources to the best advantage ; they cannot carry their goods to the markets where the prices rule highest ; they have been barred from some articles completely, and forced to buy others at such enhanced prices that competition with the free foreigner is out of the question. By the navigation laws, they have been put at a distance both from supplies and from markets, as effectually as if new oceans, or rather extensive deserts, had been interposed. Artificial barriers have been created to vex their passage. The rate of wages has been artificially depressed, and the working people have been subjected to the miseries which arise from violent fluctuations in trade. Dear bread, dear clothing, dear comfort—these are the fruits of protection ; industries unstable because bolstered up by changing laws ;

manufacturers schooled to dependence on the caprices of legislation and the "shrieks of locality." Fearing fair competition, as an invalid fears a draft, they have been limited, where they have not been destroyed. These are the gifts which the system of bounties to classes has conferred upon the United States during these many years, and especially these last eighteen years of most faithful and vigorous application of restrictive doctrines.

No doubt such statements as these will be met in certain quarters with vehement protest. Will it not be said: Has not the country of late been advancing industrially at a rate unparalleled? Are we not turning out goods more cheaply than ever before? Do we not pour forth our products to the world? Are not the fabrics of our factories making their way into the marts of all the nations? Do we not send calico to Manchester and cutlery to Sheffield? Is not the balance of trade heavily in our favor, and the drain of gold from Europe so great that the financial centres there are quaking on the verge of panic? Questions like these swarm for utterance in minds schooled with the wisdom of the seventeenth century and filled with the notions of Pennsylvania—with the wisdom which can imagine a sale without a purchase; which regards gold as the *sum-mum bonum*, albeit it cannot be eaten nor drunk, neither used for clothing nor shelter; which clings to the faith that excess of exports brings in the precious metal, in face of the fact that it does not: which so believes in high prices that it puts on taxes to make them high, and so delights in low prices that

it rejoices in them even when they are the issue of bankruptcy.

I cannot attempt to answer these questions *seriatim* nor exhaustively, but the fact that they are so strenuously urged makes it proper to undertake a more detailed analysis of the facts involved than would otherwise be necessary.

Turning our attention first to Great Britain, it is to be granted at the outset, that the last few years have witnessed a decline in her prosperity. Free trade England has not escaped the misfortune that has run around the globe. In the United States, the crash came in 1873, and in Great Britain, troubles followed fast in 1874. Now it is easy to say, that England's asphyxia resulted from the release of her body from all ligatures; but, unfortunately, it is just as easy to contend that the congestion of American trade is chargeable to protective trusses and tourniquets. Such assertions prove nothing. *Post hoc ergo propter hoc* is never more feeble logic than in the domain of economic science. Happily we are not restricted to such vague reasoning. An examination of the facts and figures of English trade reveals the presence of four great causes which, together with others which need not be discussed, are entirely sufficient to account for the recent depression:—

1. The industrial and financial distress prevailing in nearly all the countries with which England has extended relations.

2. A distinct speculative stimulus applied to English manufacture and trade in 1871, by heavy foreign loans.

3. The increase of tariff restrictions in the United States, Germany and Holland.

4. The agricultural difficulties arising out of the English system of land tenure, under stress of poor harvests and strong American competition.

Other causes might be enumerated, but these seem chief in importance. They are entirely adequate.

To prevent misapprehension, it may be well to say here that the case, in my view (which I shall endeavor to support) is not nearly so discouraging as it has been represented to be.

#### 1. *The General Depression.*

It would be waste of space to enlarge on this point. The facts are patent and everywhere admitted. All that is necessary is to insist on the recognition of the influence as applying to English trade. The relations of international commerce are so intimate, in this day of steam and electricity, that disasters in one country are reflected to all the others with as much certainty and acuteness as in the sympathy of troubles betwixt the stomach and the brain.

#### 2. *The Speculative Fever.*

- The year 1871 was a great year in England for foreign investments. The average minimum discount rate of the Bank of England,—which was seven per cent in 1866,—had been for four years revolving around two and three per cent. Capitalists turned their eyes abroad, and presently there

was a general rush for foreign stocks. Heavy loans were made to the United States, to France, to Russia, to Turkey, to Egypt, to the South American states and to India. Nor were the investors over particular as to the character of the security. They seized government bonds, state bonds and municipal bonds with equal avidity; they loaned for railways, for gas works, for telegraphs—for anything which bore the superficial appearance of legitimate enterprise. In this sober day, we do not expect South Sea Bubbles, but the moneyed men of England, in 1871, seemed to be as hot-headed for foreign ventures as a body of modern capitalists could well become. The results may be best exhibited for the purposes of this inquiry as they manifested themselves in the foreign commerce of the country.

In the table on page 92 is shown the course of the export trade of the United Kingdom for the past twenty years. Two points stand out clearly—three, I may say,—wave crests in the industrial movement. The high per centage of 1859 has obvious relations with the American crash of 1857. That of 1863 signifies the war disturbances, and especially the folly of the United States in parting with its stores of coin and bullion. That of 1871 exhibits the influence we are considering, namely, the great loans made by England in that year to every needy applicant who took off his hat in Lombard Street. With the first two periods we are only concerned as they serve to justify the reasoning. The teachings of the latter are directly to the point. Heavy loans, heavy exports; an era of sudden activity, advancing prices;

TABLE  
SHOWING COURSE OF EXPORT TRADE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM  
FROM 1859 TO 1879.

<i>Year.</i>	<i>Exports in millions.</i>	<i>Increase per cent. over previous year.</i>	<i>Decrease per cent. from previous year.</i>
1859.	£155.7	11	—
1860.	164.5	5.6	—
1861.	159.6	—	3
1862.	166	4	—
1863.	196.9	18.6	—
1864.	212.6	8	—
1865.	218.8	3	—
1866.	239.9	9.6	—
1867.	225.8	—	5.8
1868.	227.7	0.8	—
1869.	237	4	—
1870.	244	2.5	—
1871.	283.5	16	—
1872.	314.6	10.9	—
1873.	311	—	1
1874.	297.6	—	4
1875.	281.6	—	5
1876.	256.7	—	8.5
1877.	252	—	1.8
1878.	245	—	2.7

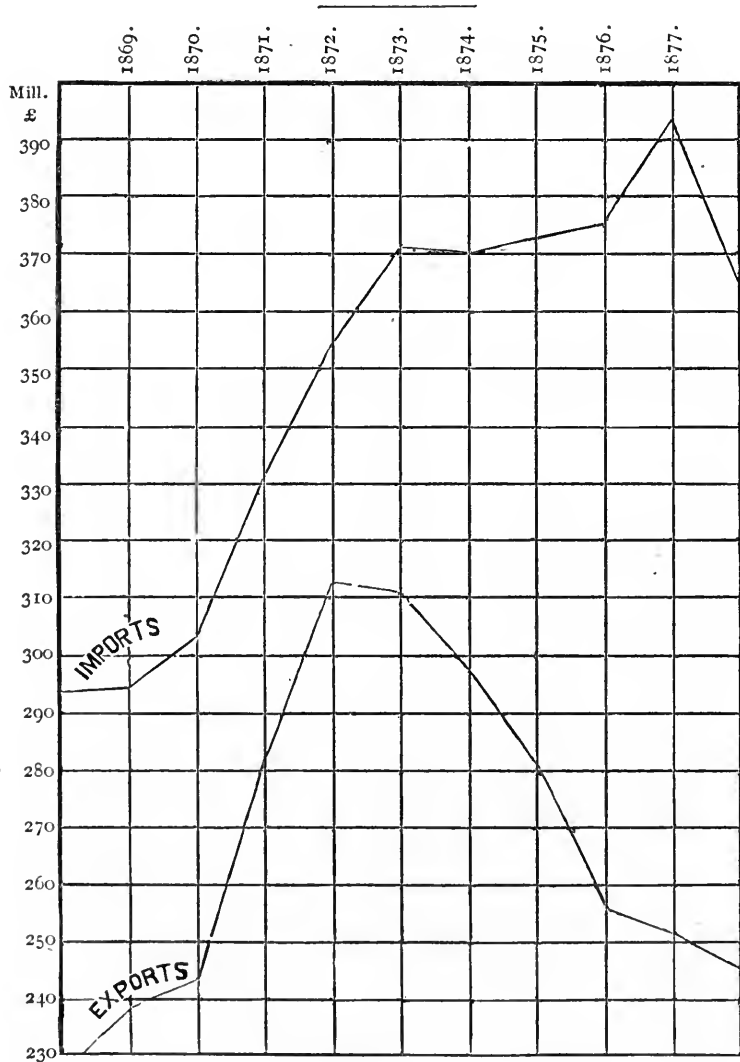
increasing production, increasing prosperity; and then when the funds to be transmitted are gone—the figure skips suddenly into the other column; and there it remains year after year.

Observe that it is not contended that speculation in 1871 was the sole cause of the continued decline in British exports; but the table shows clearly that it is one of the causes, and indicates, by the intimacy of relation in time, that is a chief cause.



# DIAGRAM

ILLUSTRATING THE INCREASE AND DECLINE OF EXPORTS AND IMPORTS OF  
THE UNITED KINGDOM, 1868 TO 1878,



Exactly what has happened is vividly indicated in the appended diagram.

It may be remarked that the facts shown in this diagram, taken in comparison with the bullion statistics, give small support to the common theory about the "balance of trade," and the use of gold in international commerce. It is estimated that England transmitted to foreign lands in four years, 1870-1873, over £100,000,000; yet during those four years she received in gold and silver £19,000,000 more than she gave, and her imports exceeded her exports by over £200,000,000.

There is nothing mysterious in this. Trade between countries is exactly what it is between individuals. Is it not a barter of goods for goods, with money entering, in greater or less quantity, as a medium or middle commodity through which the exchange is conveniently effected? The excess of imports constantly shown in the trade of England signifies her receipt of commercial profits and of dividends from investments abroad.

### 3. *Foreign Tariffs.*

Analyzing the export trade of Great Britain with reference to destination, we discover that the diminution distributes itself among only six of the many lines of traffic. The year of highest export was 1872—£314,000,000. In 1877, the value had declined to £252,000,000. Total deficiency £62,000,000.

From an able pamphlet on "Free Trade and English Commerce" by Augustus Mongredien, I take the following table:

TABLE

SHOWING THE TRADE LINES IN WHICH BRITISH EXPORTS HAVE DECLINED.

	1872. <i>Exports in millions</i>	1877. <i>Exports in millions</i>	<i>Deficiency in millions</i>
To Russia.....	£9.5	£6.2	£3.3
“ Germany.....	43.1	28.9	14.2
“ Holland.....	24.3	16	8.3
“ United States. ....	45.9	19.9	26
“ Egypt.....	7.3	2.3	5
“ South America.....	8.4	3.4	5
	<u>138.5</u>	<u>76.7</u>	<u>61.8</u>

The total reduction of British exports, £62,000,000, between the years 1872 and 1877 is thus practically accounted for in the six lines of trade here specified. Is free trade the cause of the decline in these directions? Does the fall result because England has persisted, since 1872, in a policy which she has pursued for thirty years? The facts lead plainly away from such absurdities. A glance at the table on page 92 will show, that the export trade of England has been strongly influenced by the tariff legislation of the United States; the depressing effects of the acts of 1864-5-6, increasing the rates, being most clearly visible; albeit overlaid in 1871 by the conditions previously mentioned, and influences growing out of the Franco-Prussian war. Germany has also deemed it wise to cut down her own trade and that of her neighbors by “protection.” This takes the two heaviest delinquents in the list. Next comes Holland, and Holland also has caught

the protection fever, while besides, it figures in English commerce largely as a way-station on the road to Germany, and hence shares with Germany in the latter's declining trade. With more than seventy-eight per cent of the deficiency, therefore, protective tariffs have greatly and directly to do. It is not wise in protectionists to point to the recent decline of English exports to demonstrate the truth of their tenets.

#### 4. *England's Agricultural Troubles.*

The agricultural interest of the United Kingdom is in a worse condition than it has been for at least a generation. This point is discussed elsewhere, and I shall not now dwell on the radical causes; but for the immediate purpose, reference to the facts is necessary. Disaster began in the year 1874, and ran coincident with the general industrial embarrassments. From 1874 to 1879 the history of British agriculture is a history of failure. With every season things have gone from bad to worse, and the results of the recent harvest,—if harvest that can be called which was but a scraping together of what remained after seven months of rain and lowering skies—were more discouraging than ever. The deficiency of wheat is estimated at not less than 130 000,000 bushels; or more than half the required supply. The Irish potato crop has suffered enormous ravages, the yield of rye is poor and meagre, the returns of farm staples of all kinds bear out the dismal tale of poverty. It is altogether likely that

England will have to import breadstuffs this year to the amount of \$230,000,000.

It ought not to be necessary to point out the bearing of all this on the general course of trade. One might infer from some writers, that agriculture is an isolated interest,—that the agricultural distress of the United Kingdom is a thing to be considered by itself; that it has no connection with the difficulties of the British manufacturer. But do practical men need to be told that trouble on the soil means trouble in the workshop, as well in England, as in the United States? I need not dwell upon this. I desire simply that this element in the trade difficulties of Great Britain be not left out of the count. Let the amazing fact be noted that it was not liberal policies in trade which sent superfluous rain to the British Isles. Nor was it the protective policy which caused the sun to shine on the fields of our great West.

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Let this review suffice. The general commercial depression, the speculative fever of 1871, the increase of foreign tariffs, and the troubles of the British farmers, are causes enough for the decline of British exports, and it savors of reasoning from desire rather than from fact, to charge destructive influences to the policy of commercial liberty.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### OUR AGRICULTURAL OPULENCE AND DOMINANCE.

Potens armis atque ubere glebae. VIRGIL.

OUR INCREASING EXPORTS—THE PROTECTIONIST ARGUMENT NOT BORNE OUT BY THE FACTS—OUR SURPLUS COMES FROM THE LAND—NO THANKS TO PROTECTION—AMERICA'S OPPORTUNITY.

THE growing excess of American exports over imports is the feature upon which the boast is usually founded, that the protective policy is pushing American manufactures into the markets of the world, and driving thence the product of the English mills and furnaces. The reports for the last ten years give the following figures—excluding the precious metals, in deference to those who do not wish to reckon them as part of the produce and merchandise of the United States; and including the re-exports of foreign commodities, that this side of the account may lose none of its advantage :

TABLE  
SHOWING EXPORTS AND IMPORTS OF COMMODITIES FROM AND INTO THE UNITED STATES 1870-1880.

<i>Year.</i>	<i>Exports in millions</i>	<i>Imports in millions</i>	<i>Excess of Imports.</i>	<i>Excess of Exports.</i>
1870.	\$392.7	\$435.9	\$43.1	\$—
1871.	442.8	520.2	77.4	—
1872.	444.1	626.6	182.4	—
1873.	522.4	642.1	119.6	—
1874.	586.	567.4	—	18.8
1875.	513.4	533.	19.5	—
1876.	540.3	460.7	—	79.6
1877.	602.4	451.3	—	151.1
1878.	694.8	437.	—	257.8
1879.	710.4	445.7	—	264.6

The change, then, appeared in 1874, immediately after the great crash. Previous to that year, the balance was "against" the United States clear back to 1861, when the disaster of war made it "favorable" by \$1,313,824. Not, however, to press too hardly on these disturbing points, I desire to ask simply, whether the financial panic of 1873, and the consequent withdrawal of British capital from American enterprise, had anything to do with lessening importation and increasing exportation? Has the reduction of our National debt—large blocks of which were held abroad—by more than \$250,000,000 in ten years, been without influence in the same direction?

Leaving these queries to work out their own suggestions, I pass to particulars. The advocates of protection point with exultation to the increasing exports of American commodities. Let us all exult in them. But we should scarcely attempt to construct from the facts a defence of the hot-house theory of industrial thrift. For of what are the exports of the United States made up? If it appear, as a fact, that duties of twenty per cent on iron, fifty per cent to prohibition on wool, sixty per cent on silk, and so on, result in heavy exports of these commodities in competition with the free foreign product, this might be taken as a justification of the restrictive method. (Would it not show, also, that the time had come for the abandonment of that method?) But is it so?

On the contrary it will appear that eighty-eight per cent of the exports of the United States represents the pure richness of our natural gifts:—the

fat of the land; the vigor of our western grain fields, the verdure of our southwestern pastures, the fertility of our southern plantations and the abundance of our Pennsylvania oil-wells.

In the appended tables are shown the exports for 1879 of the crude fruits of the land, on the one hand, and of the productions of our protected manufactures, on the other. Under the head of the Land we make no account of the native wealth of our mines nor of the splendid resources of our forests! We have credited to "manufactures," claimed

#### LAND AND NATURE.

##### EXPORTS OF THE CRUDE PRODUCTS OF THE LAND OF THE UNITED STATES IN 1879.

Bread Stuffs.....	\$210,355,528
Raw Cotton.....	162,304,250
Provisions,.....	116,858,650
Mineral Oil....	40,305,249
Tobacco Leaf .....	25,157,364
Animals, living... ..	11,487,754
Tallow .....	6,934,940
Furs and Fur Skins.....	4,828,158
Oil Cake.....	4,394,010
Spirits distilled.....	2,673,241
Animal Oils.....	2,648,834
Vegetable Oils.....	2,497,694
Coal.....	2,319,398
Seeds.....	2,281,828
Naval Stores, (Rosin, Pitch, etc.).....	2,260,586
Spirits Turpentine.....	2,045,673
Hides, etc.....	1,171,523
Other Unmanufactured.....	9,092,619
	<hr/>
	\$609,617,299



to be the fruits of protection, all the richness that unaided nature has poured out in these channels, that there might not be the smallest ground for a charge of unfair treatment. Nevertheless, this is the magnificent showing which our soil, sun and waters make !

Below is the exhibit of our efforts to outwit natural laws:—

“PROTECTED” MANUFACTURES.

EXPORTS OF MANUFACTURED COMMODITIES FROM THE UNITED STATES FOR THE YEAR 1879.

Manufactures of:—

Cotton .....	\$10,853,950
Tobacco.....	3,057,876
Wood (including unmanufactured). ....	15,624,503
Iron and Steel.....	14,935,524
Leather.....	7,769,069
Sugar.....	7,086,399
Drugs and Chemicals. ....	3,098,506
Agricultural Implements.....	2,933,388
Copper.....	2,933,205
Ordinance Stores.....	1,966,689
Other Manufactured. ....	19,662,334
	<hr/>
	\$89,921,443

How poor, in comparison with the land, is the part which manufacture plays in our exports! We seem as yet to be trifling with our opportunities. Where, in this report, are the evidences of that care for skilled labor which furnishes the protectionist so unfailing an argument? Raw cotton one hundred and sixty-two millions; manufactured cotton eleven millions. Leaf tobacco twenty-five millions; “manu-

factured" tobacco three millions. Iron and steel fifteen millions! There was almost as much cheese exported as that,—twelve millions; there was twenty-two millions worth of lard sent abroad, and of bacon and hams fifty-one millions. Where is the heavily protected wool interest? It is hiding away among "other manufactured articles" with a shivering figure of \$346,733. The produce of the dairy mates it fifteen times over—butter \$5,421,205.

A closer examination points the conclusion with still greater emphasis. From an exhibit of the principle lines of increase of our exports, I compile the following instructive table.

TABLE

SHOWING INCREASE OF EXPORTS DURING TEN YEARS.

<i>Commodities.</i>	1869. <i>Exports in millions.</i>	1879. <i>Exports in millions.</i>	<i>Increase per cent.</i>
Leather.....	\$ 3	\$ 6.8	2166
Animals.....	0.9	11.5	1177
Sugar .....	0.5	6.1	1120
Copper and Brass.....	0.4	3.	650
Fruits.....	0.3	1.9	533
Provisions.....	29.6	116.9	294
Bread Stuffs.....	53.7	210.3	291
Agricultural Implements..	1.	2.9	190
Tallow.....	2.4	6.9	187
Cotton.....	5.8	10.8	86
Coal .....	1.5	2.3	53
Iron and Steel.....	9.9	12.7	42

Crude commodities, we see again, appear with overshadowing conspicuousness. The vaunted influence of protection vanishes away before the mag-

nitude of the figures. Leather leads the list. Is there any thanks to the tariff for that? The leather men well know that the chief obstacle to the extension of their trade is the system which cuts them off from foreign hides, and prevents their taking their pay in such commodities as foreigners have to offer. Animals come next ;—surely not because they were suckled on protection pap. Then sugar, an interest confessedly restrained by the duties on the raw material. Next stands copper—a monumental fraud in the protective category of frauds. Why, indeed, should the export of copper not increase? Our copper mines are so full even to bursting, that to keep up the price, our protected copper men sell their surplus abroad for less than they will sell it to the patriots who support the “American system.” Fruits stand next in the list :—oranges have been allowed to grow in the sun ; the dried-apple industry has not been “fostered” in the alkali fields of Nevada. It is not necessary to go through the list. Its signification is plain enough ; and the disciple of the forcing system in industry is welcome to whatever comfort he may there find.

I will add but one bit more. Iron and steel are credited with an increased *export* of forty-two per cent. It is a poor little figure to pounce upon, but a study of it is suggestive. The quantity of pig-iron produced in the United States from 1869 to 1878, inclusive (reports for 1879 are not at hand), was 19,984,715 tons ; the quantity “retained for home consumption” was 21,206,404 tons. Deficit to be made up by *importation* 1,221,689 tons. The

statistics of steel and iron railroad bars make a like record; production 6,290,765 tons; "retained for home consumption," 8,739,617—deficit supplied by foreigner, 2,448,852 tons. Comment is superfluous.

There are a variety of lessons which might be drawn from the exhibit of the preceding pages. I propose to confine myself for the present to one. A wise man, if he finds that he prospers exceedingly as a carpenter, does not therefore bend his energies in the direction of blacksmithing. England will make a great mistake if, as is possible, and as has been proposed in Parliament, she re-enacts her corn laws or laws of a like nature. The United States will make a great mistake, if she does not seize the opportunity which recent years have pressed upon her with almost imperative vehemence, and expand her exports, in the only way in which they can be expanded through the agency of laws—namely, by reducing those laws to a minimum, by the repeal of obnoxious features; by removing restrictions, by taking down barriers. The merchant of Venice, when he sent out his vessels to trade in the Levant, did not straightway cause torpedoes to be sunk in the harbor against their return, nor devise appliances to impede the home voyage, much less add pirate crafts to the risks of the sea voyage.

This was not the custom of benighted Venice. It is the "American system." And it has been the American system hitherto, because American producers have not looked abroad, being blessed with such bountiful markets within their own borders. But now they are turning their eyes in earnest

to the marts of Mexico and South America and Asia,—even to the great trade centers of England and the Continent. They will never reach them, except they agree to those relations of reciprocity which are the very stimulus and essence of trade. In vain does our State Department collect its statistics, showing new markets and human needs, yet unsupplied by our skill and labor; in vain, unless mutuality is to be observed.

Let us narrow the field of observation still more. The United States should aim to supply Great Britain and Ireland with the great bulk of her food staples; and Great Britain should, nay, must, modify her agriculture to the new conditions, and direct her displaced labor into more remunerative channels. It is an error to suppose that the present relation of American competition to British agriculture is a transient one. True, the bearing of that competition is greatly intensified by passing causes; but beneath all surface-movements, the free soil of the States is pressing the hampered and contracted ground of England to the wall, so far as meat and bread stuffs are concerned. The best authorities declare, that an English farmer, under the most favorable circumstances, cannot live under a smaller price for wheat than \$1.40 a bushel. But American wheat can be landed in Liverpool with a good profit at \$1.15. It is useless to expect any substantial change in this field of rivalry from the reform of the British land laws. It is certainly true that those laws are a great burden to the British farmer. They prevent him from owning the land. They pile upon

him an exorbitant rent. They bar him from improvements. They shackle him with arbitrary rules of management. But when they are done away with,—if that is to be the outcome of the struggle,—it would seem that the “large farm” dogma will be done away with also, and unprofitable grain fields will be turned to dairy and garden production, to the discomfiture of the Frenchmen who now thrive upon English obstinacy.

Then will come America’s opportunity.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### FREE TRADE FOR THE UNITED STATES.

"All interchange is in substance and effect barter: he who sells his productions for money, and with that money buys other goods, really buys those goods with his own produce. And so of nations: their trade is a mere exchange of exports for imports; and whether money is employed or not, things are only in their permanent state when the exports and imports exactly pay for each other.

"When this is the case, equal sums of money are due from each country to the other; the debts are settled by bills, and there is no balance to be paid in the precious metals. The trade is in a state like that which is called in mechanics a condition of stable equilibrium."—MILL'S PRINCIPLES OF POL. ECON., CAP. 21.

THE NEEDS OF OTHER LANDS—OUR ABILITY TO SUPPLY THEM—  
WHO THE TARIFF TINKERS ARE—INCONSISTENCY OF PROTEC-  
TIONISTS—THE PATIENT TAX-PAYER—CONDITIONS OF REFORM.

**A**MONG the economic principles which the Corn Law discussion emphasized, was the fundamental truth that trade is barter; exchange of goods for goods. It is undeniable that without imports there can be no exports and *vice versa*. Moreover there is no economy in exporting as much as we can, and bringing nothing back, except money. Trade will cease, if there be not real compensations. England needed corn; and when the law denied her the right to obtain that corn in exchange for the productions of her mills, her activity declined, the factories failed to send forth their abundance. There must be two parties to be benefitted, otherwise trade

will die. Increase of exports means increase of imports ; to have the one you must have the other. The time has come, and fully come, when this plain truth must be applied to the industry and commerce of the United States. The scope which it has, or may have, can hardly be imagined by one who has not before him the facts of our resources and the needs of other countries.

*Our Main Stay.*

As agriculture must always be the basis of our prosperity and the chief vocation of our people ; as its resources have relieved us from panics and revived our trade ;—there is no solution of questions as to our foreign commerce which does not make our agriculture the chief factor.

It is scarcely thirty years since we imported wheat from the Black Sea ; and men are living who remember bread riots in our cities. Now it is a matter of discussion, whether this year our surplus crop of wheat alone will be 160,000,000 or 200,000,000 bushels. This year our production will be even larger than last. Within two years, there has been an increase of one fifth of our wheat acreage. Experts count upon a wheat yield of 420,000,000 bushels. Deducting for seed and home consumption, and for the quantity left over from last year, we shall have 200,000,000 bushels for export. This will bring to us, say \$150,000,000 or more ; but will other countries continue this one-sided cash trade ? Will they always pay us the cash ; or must we, to hold this splendid prize, cultivate mutuality ? There



are many capricious contingencies of sun and sky, in connection with our foreign grain trade. Is it not wisdom to begin the barter,—if not directly, commodity for commodity, then with the money received for our grain; buying the goods we need, in the best and cheapest markets,—and thus keep our customers and improve our custom?

We need not consult our consular reports to ascertain our trading energies. When our farmers are carrying oat-meal from Iowa to Scotland and beef from Texas to England; when stock on the hoof never stops till it lands in Europe on a through bill of lading,—we are certain that the smallest elements of our farm product are seeking a profitable market.

### *Room for "Fuller Trade."*

What is needed for the development and increase of our land and trade is the capital relief which freedom gives. Then we may study with profit the returns of other lands, made under consular regulations. Then authoritative data, as to the wants of different peoples, as to their markets, and the best means of reaching them, become doubly useful.

In vain does the eloquent head of the State Department advise with chambers of commerce for a "full trade," with museums of samples for its guidance. These are well enough; but they will always fail until the gyves are removed from commerce. It is a provocation, a tantalization, to spread out temptingly the kingdoms of the earth, as our consular reports do,—and yet know that trade

must come home empty and bankrupt, because it failed to interchange. These reports serve one purpose; and I have reported a resolution in Congress for their more frequent publication. That purpose is, to enforce the argument against our restrictive policies. This the reports assuredly do, inasmuch as they show so many undeveloped yet hampered possibilities.

What a display they make? Austria sells us yearly a million of dollars worth of buttons which we might make; Australia is opening her ranges and pastures, to give us wool; Belgium imports our raw cotton through Germany and France, to the amount of eight millions annually; Brazil sells to us, but buys of others; Columbia imports sixteen millions per year for home consumption, and buys but little, though we buy eight millions of her; Great Britain sends fifty steamers to Chili,—and we, none; China wants our good cottons, to take the place of English mildewed goods; Denmark can teach us dairy thrift; France,—seventy per cent rural, and thirty per cent urban,—industrious, provident and recuperative,—should be mutual with us, as she was with England for reciprocal advantage. Let Guatamala and Brazil follow the Hawaiian treaty; let them remove all duties on exports, and their coffee, sugar, and dye stuffs will find with us ample markets. Germany goes everywhere for profit and benefit, and our Consuls offer us, from her, much technical education and enlarging opportunities. Greece desires our petroleum, canned fruits and sewing machines, yet our flag is not known at the Pireus; under our eyes

are the West Indies and the Guianas, with a trade of three hundred millions, which other nations control ; Italy seeks reciprocity for our grain, coal and cottons, but her silk and other industries are barred here by a heavy duty ; the Netherlands are reviving their old economies, looking for and supplying the wants of others,—a policy in which we have little part ; Persia buys four millions of cottons from England, when we could compete and furnish a better quality of fabrics ; Russia buys ten times more from Great Britain than from us,—iron, machinery, coal, cottons, chemicals and copper. She too made a failure, last year, in her crop of wheat, of 21 per cent. Siam has a trade equal to South America, to which we are strangers ; Spain exaggerates our own system, by tariff discriminations against our cargoes—fifty cents per ton against twenty-five cents on European cargoes,—and we have no redress. Sweden and Norway are a part of Great Britain as nearly allied in trade as our own States. Switzerland, through consular “Declared Exports” and return of imports, shows a trade with us of ten millions annually, which has a large possibility of increase. Her sister Republic, Mexico, should be in close connection with us by every tie of neighborhood and variety of production. Why is she not ? Syria sends us a little olive oil and some rags ; Turkey rivals us in taxing her own industries ; Uruguay, Paraguay and Venezuela, furnish fine fields for our exportations, in return for their coffee. Africa is holding out her hands unto us, as to all the world, bidding us share the opulence which other nations with more liberal ideas will enjoy. Great

Britain, in the last fifteen years, has had an excess of imports over exports of \$5,000,000,000 in merchandize, and yet has received an excess in specie of \$500,000,000; and retains beside an investment abroad of \$3,000,000,000; while we have in that period, exported an excess of \$629,000,000 over imports in merchandize, and \$788,000,000 in specie. India,—like Japan, an anomaly in trade,—exceeds largely in exports over imports, and yet receives largely an excess of specie—making a profit of \$120,000,000, one half of which goes to England.

From these thirty and more countries upon our earth, we may glean profitable examples for unloosing the bands which suppress trade; for nothing is more certain, than that these markets will never be ours, until we learn the lesson of John Stuart Mill, at the head of this chapter, viz. that to sell, we must buy.

“Take away the tariff and the country is ruined!” cried the British Tory of forty years ago. Yet England’s industry and commerce throve and expanded after the repeal, in a measure to which history furnishes no parallel. Her people were allowed to buy where they would, and buying abroad they paid abroad—exported the goods which they manufactured to advantage, extended their market over the world, bought where they could buy cheapest, and sold where they could sell dearest.

### *The Tariff Tinkers.*

Before taking such an extended view of mankind, from China to Peru, it might be well to look closely at home, and observe the microscopic *insectivora*

which are preying on our generous body politic. Congress has forgotten the virtues, the skill and frugality of 1846, which enabled us to attain material abundance, under a tariff averaging twenty-three and a half per cent *ad valorem*, and which was lowered in 1857, to nineteen per cent.

To what a humiliating discussion of great principles are we reduced? Do the people arise here, as in England they arose in 1846, and thunder their demand as overtaxed consumers, for cheapness and against scarcity—against high prices and for abundance? No. It is the manufacturer of this, that and the other, seeking reductions on his raw materials. It is the maker of wearing apparel who asks that the basis of chemical colors,—chrome iron ore and bichromate potash—for dyeing cotton and wool, be placed on the free list. Why not demand freedom for the goods themselves, and for the same reason?

The demand is pitched in the same bated breath for free salt, sugar, steel rails, paper, type etc. Salt yields only \$800,000 per annum to the Government. The tax on this article in sacks, barrels and packages is over thirty per cent; and in bulk over sixty-five per cent. Benton regarded a tax on salt as an impious contrivance to frustrate the beneficence of God; for was it not born of the sea and sun? Is the tax on sugar less impious and flagrant? The *ad valorem* duty on sugar of the average type, which costs from three to four cents per pound, is fifty-four and a half per cent. This is not for revenue, but to help a few plantations in a remote section. As sugar is only next to salt or bread as a necessity, is

it not time the people were making their leagues against sugar and salt taxes?

A majority of the 7000 newspapers of this country have upheld this bounty system, or did uphold it, until white printing paper advanced fifty per cent! Now they desire the twenty per cent tariff on paper removed. But the paper-makers plead the tariff. They say: "Are not the materials like pulp and the chemicals,—carbonate of soda, quick lime, soda-ash and chloride of lime,—which enter into the manufacture of paper, heavily taxed? Take that burden from us first; and we will see about it." The revenue on pulp for 1878-79, was only \$152.80. Put pulp on the free list and one pretext is gone. To be sure other component parts of paper-manufacture pay greater custom dues,—but is our treasury in distress? Is not cheap paper a *desideratum*? Should not knowledge prevail? Why not, then, remove the duty? Why not "protect" book and newspaper-making, and the manufacturers of paper also, by general repeal? And certainly, if the tariff is abolished on paper, why not on type? and if on type, why not on the raw materials,—lead, copper, tin and antimony, which compose the type-metal?

To gratify a few firms which make steel rails—already protected by patents and duties,—eighty thousand miles of railway in the United States are made tributary, not to the treasury, but to these firms. If the price of steel rails at the English mills is \$22.00 per ton less than at our mills, do not our consumers pay \$28.00 per ton more, calculating for duty and transportation? Who in the end pays

this tax?—who paid it for the 4000 miles of railway constructed in the United States the past year? The toilers of the soil.

*The Condition of Reform.*

The consumers pay it all. They support the pauper millionaires who manufacture steel rails for them—when they feel inclined. They are the victims who make good all the losses arising from the misdirection of capital and labor under the “fostering” influence of the tariff. Why do they not rebel? Why is it that they bear all these burdens so shamelessly put upon them, and yet make such feeble remonstrance—if indeed they utter any syllable of complaint? In England, indeed, they were driven to revolt by the sharp pangs of hunger. They were forced to cry out—they were compelled to fight for their lives. But are not Americans shrewd enough to know when they are cheated? Must they be utterly crushed before they will realize that they are imposed upon?

“But why do not you, who sit in the halls of legislation, abolish these burdens?”—That is a question often asked. My answer is that the people, in the flush of temporary prosperity, are indifferent. Their representatives are supple before corporate and other combinations. These combinations extend through the whole range of protected industries. They are so potential that they have even discrowned the rail-road kings, except those who manufacture Bessemer rails.

Were there hope of relief by act of Congress,

this appeal would not be made in this peculiar way. The people must send representatives to Congress ; and to be representatives, they should be instructed by popular votes on distinct issues.

The Corn Laws were not repealed until the people rose and demanded their abolition. Neither in this country, will the tributes of the consumers to the protected interests be done away with, nor land and trade be made free, until the citizens combine against the combination of monopolies, and compel a recognition of their rights.



## CONCLUSION.

### THE FUTURE OF FREE LAND AND FREE TRADE.

"The grand panacea, which like a beneficent medical discovery, will serve to inoculate with the healthy and saving taste for civilization, all the nations of the world;"

COBDEN'S WRITINGS, p 21.

WE approach the end of this discussion. Crude and imperfect as is this presentation of the history and principles of free land and free trade, the essentials for intelligent judgment are before us. These pages would not have been prepared, were there any chance in the legislature of this country, for the full statement of the wrong, and the proper remedy. Selfish and local influences have raised present obstacles for such remedial measures. There is, however, a tribunal, to which we may resort, for the initiation of such measures. Who should ponder the lesson of the English corn laws, if not the American farmer? Who should vitally regard them, if not the American workingman? Are not his shelter, clothing and food dependent upon them? Who should study them, if not the American manufacturer? Is he not deluded into thinking, that with a high tariff, he can overcome the burdens laid upon his raw material;—deluded into believing, that he can enlarge his market at home and abroad, by restraints on intercourse; and that he may secure last-

ing profit by perpetual plunder, and prosperity by defying the laws of nature? To all, the evils of the corn laws, and of similar laws, if studied under proper lights, would appear as deep and ramified, as the liberal issues, which came from their repeal, were wide-spread, salutary and exalting.

The sum of these results was not limited to Great Britain ; nor to her colonies, which are the blossoms of her magnificent strength.

Yet, there is an exception to this statement. It justifies the principle. After a prosperous experiment of reciprocity for many years, the disease of protection all at once finds lodgment in Canada. It will eat out the substance of the Dominion. Originating in retaliation for our failure or refusal to be mutual, it cannot live, except temporarily.

The eight provinces of the Dominion have about four millions of people, scattered over 3,372,000 square miles. Since the restrictions on trade with her have become mutual, or unmutual, her trade with us and ours with her, has been depressed. The excess of her import of merchandize is a fair test. Its excess over export has been, since 1871, \$201,419,693. Since 1875, there has been a marked failure in her material growth. Her statesmen thought that it was caused by tariff, and the tinkering for its increase began. Yet she manufactures little ; at least exports little of her manufactures. She lacks the people ; and this lack no high tariff can supply. She has soil enough and to spare. She has communications in plenty by rail and river. Why should she not, neighbor to us as she is, not only send to us her fish free,,

as she is doing, under treaty and to the mutual advantage, but her timber and lumber, which we need so much for our shelter and fencing? Why should she not have for her profit, our agricultural implements, fabrics and anthracite coal? Why should not her land and trade be free? She has abundance of what we require for our purposes. Is there any reason why her border should be a barrier against trade with us, which could not be urged for making the New York border a wall against Pennsylvania with her petroleum, coal, and iron; or against Connecticut with her sewing machines, paving stones and clocks! Her tariff for non-intercourse, while it lasts, will be a provocation and incentive to irrepressible smuggling. It is already an example to deter, not a pattern to imitate.

The colony of Victoria is, to-day, a sad example, which seems to have been disregarded by Canada. The Victorian tariff, when first made in 1853, taxed about twelve articles; all other articles being free. It was a safe and certain revenue tariff. The dues under it were easily and inexpensively collected; when lo! a mania seized the Victorians. A new budget appeared, under the pretence of making them more happy and content. This was in 1865. As has been done in the United States, so there; a certain revenue tax, as on tea and coffee, was reduced, in order that a tax might be laid on articles made abroad, which came in competition with the home manufacture. For a small seeming blessing,—which was really a curse to the home manufacturer,—the evil grew, and by subsequent laws, in 1865 and 1871,

the burden was increased, until "raw materials" rose in revolt. The cork cutters had been pleased with a heavy duty for their protection; but the bottling trade did not enjoy the pleasure. It was not mutual. The protection did not become general; and, as a consequence, the absurdity of protecting every body by a tax on all, did not appear so readily. This anomaly is well illustrated by a clever writer in the "Victorian Review," The law he says, compelled every one to move about with a weight to his leg; or with the burden of the Chinese vender of vegetables, who is only able to carry his load about the streets of Melbourne when it is doubled,—one basket before and one behind, to preserve the poise and lighten the burden! Extra duties were placed on rice because the Chinese were its consumers; but it was forgotten that one half of the consumption was by the other, and more sturdy and adventurous people of the Colony.

No wonder that Victoria is clamoring for a Zoll-Verein among her sister colonies of that remote sea. Intelligent economists there are asking for reciprocity with New South Wales, as well as with other lands. At last the husbandman and miner, as well as the importer and merchant, in the extremity of their troubles, ask that relief may come, by a return to the primal virtue of liberal trade. They are fast learning that their material growth and gain will be greatest to themselves, to England and to humanity, when the principle of *laissez faire*, in commercial matters, is the universal rule.

There will be no prosperous repose, for the trade

of colony or nation, under restrictive laws of trade. It is in the nature of such legislation, as we have demonstrated, that it is uncertain and vacillating. It gives rise to perpetual agitation, which is the bane of trade. Not until wrong is righted, will there be content and stability. This is the lesson which a review of the English corn laws and our own tariff legislation teaches.

Yet it may be said ; “ Did not England constantly increase her capital, population, and productions, under that system ? ” These questions are best answered by another.—Was not her wealth greater in proportion to her population after, than it was before ; the repeal of the corn laws ? The comparison should be made between the growth before the repeal, and the enormous growth since. Admitting all that may be said in favor of the restrictive system, is not national prosperity, based on such a system as protection, a chimera ? Does it not benefit the few favored producers, at the expense of the many consumers ? May not the general prosperity of England, even under adverse conditions, be the result of other causes than the protective system ? May it not be a result in spite of that system ?

England and her colonies grew great because of her geographical position, her laborers, her miners of coal and iron, her building materials, her inventive genius, her physical situation,—which is not liable to extreme cold nor intense heat ; but more especially because of those political, moral, and educational elements, which made her enterprising and aggressive ; and without which all other blessings would have

been of minor influence. Obstructions formidable to others, were overcome by her with comparative ease. Her ability in the maintenance of her power and credit; her persistence in keeping a cruel and remorseless land tenure system; her ability to pay high taxes, and rents, in spite of monopolies and protection and dear food,—these can be attributed to other causes than protection, now apparent since the repeal of the corn laws. The different enactments from 1346 to 1846, had in view only temporary and transient relief. They were merely modifications of a general vicious system, whose policy was, under one set of circumstances more stringent, and under another less stringent; but under all circumstances, pervaded by a spirit of class legislation in the interest of the land owner, and not of the farmer or tenant, much less of the operative in her factories. Passing over the great body of the people, the consumers, she preserved partial laws, until the skeleton, Famine, appeared at the feast to frighten the isle into its propriety.

But since the liberation of her people from tariff laws, what has not England accomplished? Call the roster of her possessions! Do they not all pay tribute to her enterprise in trade, and her ambition in conquest? In vain does France construct a canal at Suez. England finds it ready made; and through it, makes free her commerce and her power as arbiter of Asia. By her potent wand of credit and wealth, she becomes the pacificator of Europe! Thus she gives us an ensample, to be pondered, under relations that reach to the very heart of our own empire, through

the narrow neck of land which separates the Atlantic and Pacific.

Is it not humiliating that our country,—so new, exultant and enterprizing; so justly boastful of its traditional and acquired liberties; and with such an infinity of resources and energies, should react toward the narrow and slavish policies which England discarded with so much profit and contentment? Do we not know that freedom is the condition of successful trade? Are we still to learn that Congress is no school for the merchant to study how to conduct his business; or the farmer his farm, or the manufacturer his factory? How long will the state or federal legislature continue to manacle our industries, by incorporating companies which may and do add, at pleasure and by combinations, burdens on transportation, to render agricultural profits small and commodities dear? How long will the legislature authorize a few patentees and monopolists of steel rails to keep up for themselves their exorbitant and enriching prices, in despite of the advancement of physical science and liberal ideas, and at the expense of the travelling and trading masses, who demand safe transportation for life, and cheap freight for the necessities and comforts of that life? Canal facilities, local improvements, terminal accommodations and rivalries of route, may do much to second the general welfare; but the land, and the trade it creates, will never be free, while the farmer loses, by such companies, combinations and “customs,” his merited reward, and is forced to buy what he needs at a higher cost than natural laws would compel.

This is the logic which the preceding pages enunciate. It is drawn, not merely from the history and progress of English economy ; but from economic science. It will not only enable us, if properly crystallized into law, to secure markets for our productions in years of scarcity abroad and of abundance here. It will give us permanent trade, unaffected by panics or seasons.

The triumph of free land and free trade carries with it everywhere the blessings, and marks the boundaries, of civilization. It gives new laws for the increase of population and new hopes for lasting peace. It is a welcomed change, because it is the harbinger of good-will. It does not depend on the artificial enactments of men ; but is regulated by laws as immutable as those by which the atmosphere becomes of the right density. Under its benignant influence, the enmities, wars and brutalities of men will yield to concordant reciprocity. The free sails of nations, under its favoring gales, will wing forth as messengers of peace.

So beautiful and harmonious are the dispensations of Providence, that even the selfishness of man, when untrammelled by legislation, is made the instrument of his moral government, and the herald of his mercy, praise, and glory ! It would ill become the master nation of this or the other hemisphere, to be a laggard in this race of universal progress !

When the time is full for the entire abandonment of intense national policies about trade, and of the greedy system by which it has been hampered, the prophecy will be fulfilled, when each river upon whose



banks man has made his domicile will be as free as the winds and waves of the sea to which it flows, and when into every harbor—

“All nations enter with each swelling tide,  
And seas but join the regions they divide.”

Then will thanksgivings go up, not from one land alone; men every where will rejoice to be drawn together,—that their antagonisms may give place to the silken bonds of amity. Liberty to trade will make it the interest and delectation of every nation to cultivate friendly relations with every other. Wealth will be acquired from others; but not to diminish the amount of their possessions. There will be an augmentation of the common stock to the detriment of none. It will become the interest of every nation to cultivate and elevate science, literature, arts, manufactures, tastes and amenities,—in fine, the intellectual and moral condition of every other nation.

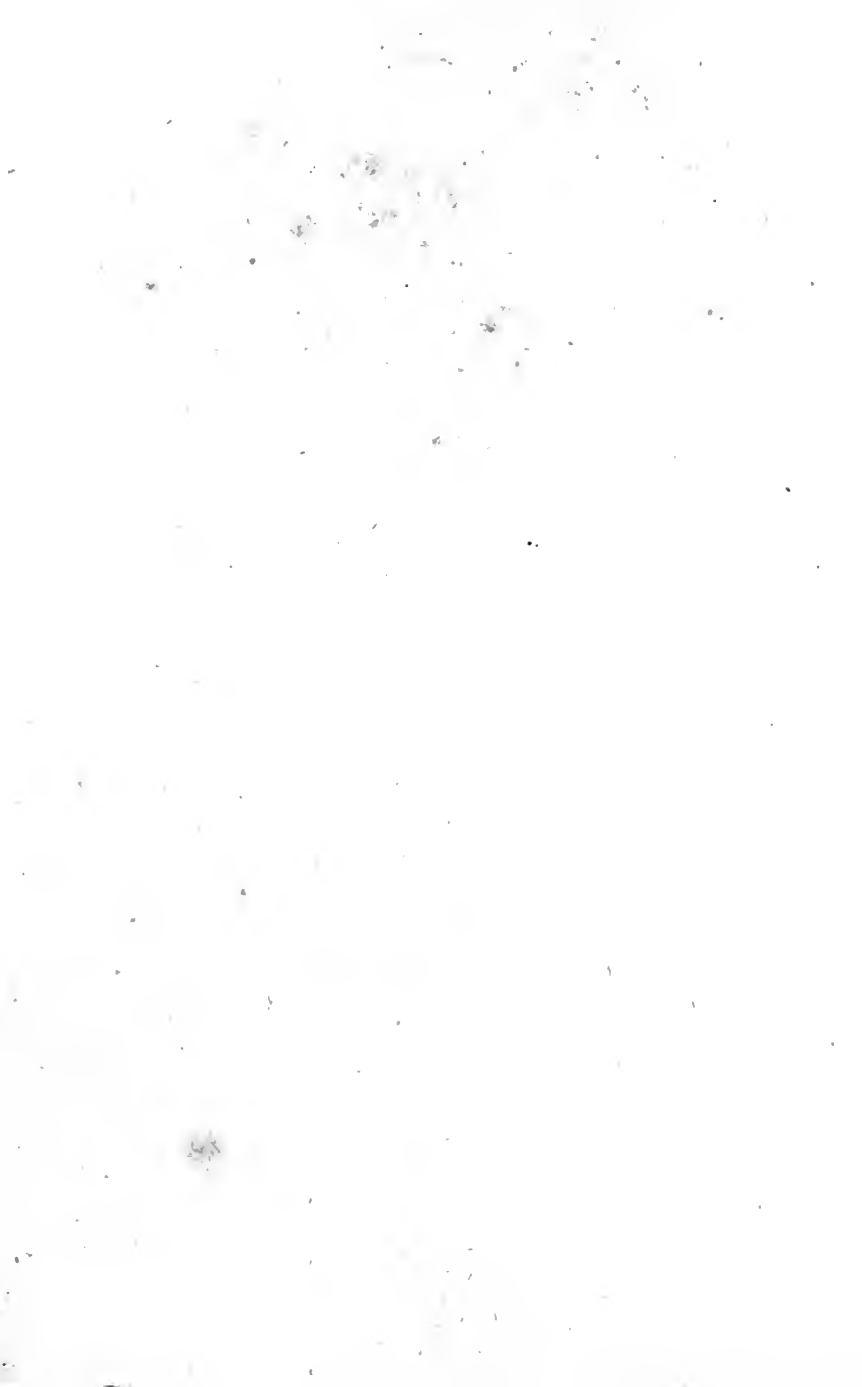
Not only will differences in climate, soil, production and society be obliterated; but the three elements of civilization, moral, physical, and intellectual, will become larger factors in advancing our race.

Nor is this progress limited in its effects to the external world. It has a spiritual significance and mission. It commands the inner and religious agencies, which are the distinguishing feature of our race and era. In making its journeys around the world to bless it, this progress carries the messengers of peace with the pauseless energy of steam. Who can discover the Ultima Thule of its adventures? Who measure its marvels and miracles?

It ill becomes us, the leading power of America, to ignore or postpone the probabilities and splendors of such a future! In another forum, I have endeavored, imperfectly and vainly, for a quarter of a century, to impress on the legislative mind, the practical application of the facts of this volume. Without being too sanguine, it is trusted that the recent developments of our agricultural surplus wealth, and the certain results to follow in succeeding years,—when all the attractive forces of our immigration are harnessed,—may awaken the honest and dominant power in the United States, (which is that of the farm and plantation,) to assert its prerogative for the supremacy of settled economic truth in its invariable relation to human experience and to the laws of nature. When that supremacy is accomplished, the plough will be as free as the sail, and the land and all the inhabitants thereof will rejoice in that liberty, which is the exaltation of individual and national life.

THE END.







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